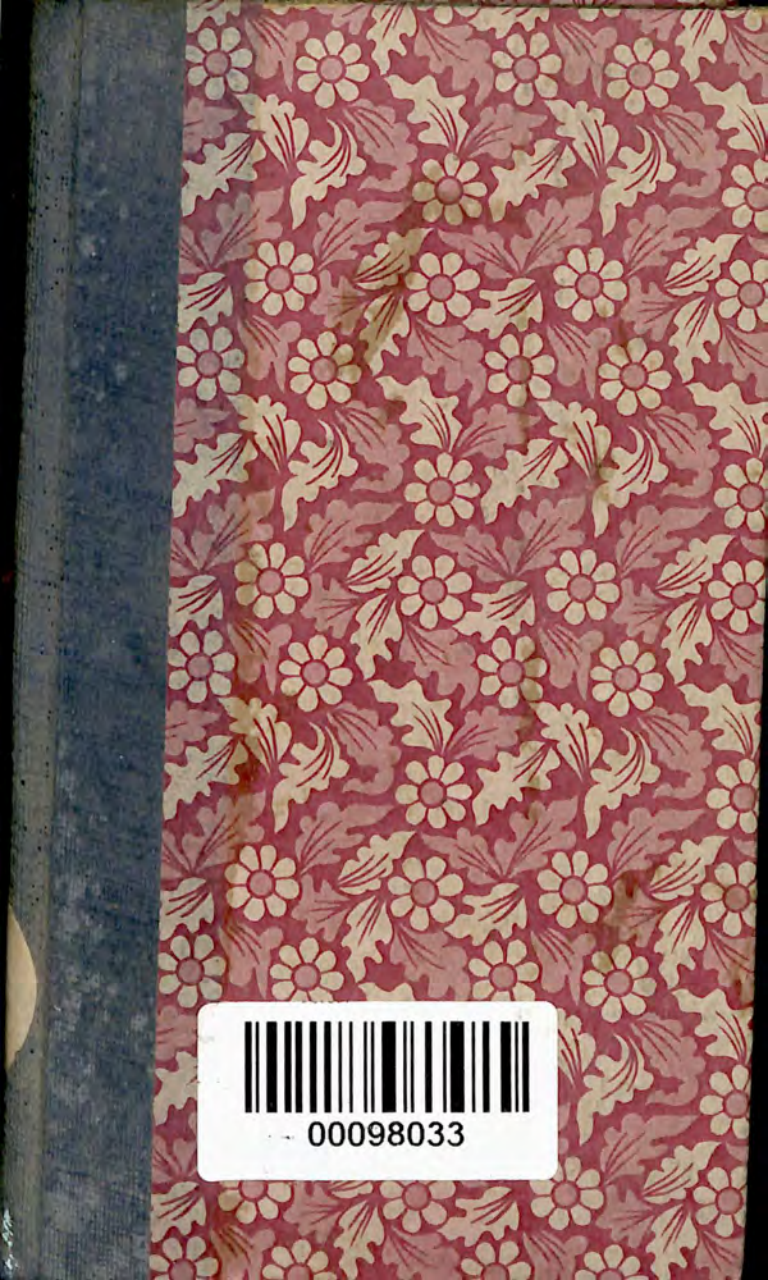
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THE

TALE

OF

A MODERN GENIUS;

OR,

THE MISERIES OF PARNASSUS.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

By J. F. Pennie.

"His was indeed such wayward doom
As seldom 'gainst man's sins is hurled;
His horoscope was dashed with gloom,
His cloud came with him to the world
And clipped him round, and weighed him down,
A deep, revokeless malison!"

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
J. ANDREWS, 167, NEW BOND STREET.
1827.

98033

This is actually the "Memorial of the life" of James Frank Pearce mentioned in "Times Obituaries" for 1886 p. 42 — Marks of this manufacture are thus entered in [illegible]'s Catalogue —

[illegible]'s (J.F.) Royal Minstrel.
——— Reginald, a Poem —
——— Harp of Parnassus —
——— Garland of Wild Roses —
——— Scenes in Palestine —

TO

SIR RICHARD COLT HOARE, BART.

SIR,

IN being permitted to dedicate the following pages to a gentleman, whose urbanity and good taste are only equalled by his zeal to advance the interests of Literature and Science, particularly when connected with the Antiquities of this country, is an honour which the author is proud thus publicly to acknowledge.

The character of SIR RICHARD COLT HOARE is too well appreciated to require any eulogy from the pen of the author of these letters; who,—much as he might wish to gratify his own feelings by embracing an opportunity thus afforded him of paying a just tribute to private virtues

and to public worth,—would rather forego the gratification, than run the risk of being charged (however unduly) with using the language of adulation.

Yet it were indeed an injustice to the long-acquired fame of Sir Richard, not to say that his unrivalled researches in British Antiquities, and those superb volumes—replete with invaluable discoveries, incontrovertible facts, and splendid illustrations—he has given to the world, and which throw so great a light on the manners and customs of the Celtic and aboriginal inhabitants of this island, place him in the highest rank of those men to whose elaborate studies and profound erudition their country are laid under infinite and everlasting obligations: while the contents of those volumes will remain an imperishable monument of his renown, when even the Celtic TUMULUS itself,—which has outlasted every other sepulchral relic of former days, however vast and magnificent,—shall be utterly removed by succeeding ages from the mountains

and plains of Britain. It may then be truly said, "how much will their value increase with their years."

The author, who in the following letters has aimed more at descriptive sketches of past times and ancient manners with the unfettered fancy of the Poet, than attempted the deeper, though drier, details and studies of the Antiquary, can therefore only simply venture to express a hope, that his auto-biographical tale may not be found altogether unworthy of the countenance it receives from the name of him to whom it is dedicated; and with every sentiment of respect, he begs leave to subscribe himself

His most obedient

and obliged Servant,

SYLVATICUS.

PREFACE.

THERE are two cases in which Plutarch has said it is allowable for a man to commend himself, and to be the publisher of his own merits. These are, when the doing of it may be of considerable advantage either to himself or to others. Tacitus says "Many wrote their own lives rather as a testimony of their conduct, than from pride." The author of the following letters is ready candidly to confess, as his apology for their appearing in print, that he wishes to obtain by their publication some benefit to himself, and hopes they will not prove unentertaining, at least, to his readers; while at the same time he effects a further object in preventing mistatements concerning both himself and others from going abroad at some future period into the world, by telling the truth while he is yet alive.

Should any persons who peruse these volumes, think the references to days and deeds of other ages too irrelevant, and wandering from his own private story, the author begs leave to state, in the first place, that

he considered if those spontaneous reflections arising from time and place were left out, the tale would be too simple and meagre of incident to interest general readers; and secondly, he would reply to them in the words of that pillar of literature, Dr. Johnson, when speaking of the illustrious island of I-Ona:—"To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and my friends be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over *any ground* which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of I-Ona."

He trusts no one who takes up this work will be so captious as to feel offended with the title,—imagining that it savours of egotism;—for he protests nothing could be further from his thoughts than motives of personal vanity when he adopted a cognomination used by him in its simplest sense.

Many of these letters were written at and near the time when the circumstances of which they treat took place, and under the strong impressions and influence which their reality had on the mind of their author. Others have since been added from notes and memoranda preserved by the author, aided by his recollection of past events, that most of the chasms in the narrative might be filled up with the principal occurrences of his life. The author begs also to state, that when two or three original letters followed each other on the same subject, he considered it advisable that they should in these volumes be united into one, to prevent too many divisions in the work, and at the same time give it a greater appearance of continued variety.

The letters have been revised and corrected, and all the notes added at the time of preparing them for the press; and this appears to the author all that is necessary at present to state respecting them, save and mereover that three or four of the letters, as well as several of the poetical pieces, have already appeared in different respectable periodicals.

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THE
TALE OF A MODERN GENIUS;
OR,
THE MISERIES OF PARNASSUS.

LETTER I.

"Fools may be mortified at the recollection of the penury of their youth, and the mean condition of their family; but great and enlightened minds, despising the idle notions of the vain and the proud, will consider superior and cultivated talents as incapable of sustaining any degradation, except by a vicious misuse of them; and as conferring a nobility on the possessor which 'not all the blood of the Howards,' nor the circumstance of being 'stuck over with titles, and hung round with strings,' can, in the eye of reason, ever bestow. We have often been disgusted with men who, after having risen to eminence by their splendid endowments and meritorious efforts, have been studious to conceal the poverty of their early condition, as if this poverty were both a degradation and a crime."—*Monthly Review of the Life of Gifford, vol. 40.*

L—— Parsonage.

My Dear Francis,

AGREEABLY to the promise exacted of me, I take up my pen to address you, though I have but little to say. Since you left this part of the country to reside in Cambridgeshire, I have had many melancholy hours; for this place, as you well know, though replete with the beauties of

nature, and surrounded on every side with the most venerable remains of antiquity, in point of society is a lonely and barbarous spot. I need not tell you how much my father dislikes books, nor how careless he has ever been respecting my education. Alas, I have had very little save what I have given myself, poor automath! and I suppose never shall.—But I will not be discouraged. How many men have I read of, who were purely self-instructed; but whose zeal for acquiring knowledge raised them from obscurity and poverty, till they attained high honours and renown.

Such instances have been confined to no particular age or nation. In the history of our own country we meet with the names of Wolsey, and Cromwell Earl of Essex; who, emerging from the humblest walks in life, filled the highest offices in the state with dignity and repute: or if we go yet further back, and trace the history of the Anglo-Saxons, we shall see that the celebrated Godwin Thane of Kent, whose son Harold wore the diadem of England till he fell in the fatal battle of Hastings, was the offspring of a herdsman. Among the ancients also are the names of Abdalonymus, Alphenus, Justin I., and numerous others, who by their virtues, talents, and perse-

verance, overcame innumerable difficulties, and nobly fought their way to honour and perpetual fame. But among the moderns let me name to you, my friend, as an astonishing example of self-taught knowledge, the Saxon peasant John Ludwig; who in his little hovel by the scanty aid of a few books, with difficulty obtained, and with little leisure save what the severity of winter gave him when he could not follow his daily labours in the field, made himself master of arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry astronomy, logic, and metaphysics; and became, in spite of all the overwhelming impediments of his miserable situation, a philosopher of the first rank. Often as I sit on the neighbouring rocks and view the extended waters of the mighty deep, or cast my eye over the fertile valley on the other side where many a rivulet steals silently along, my mind is involuntarily led to reflect on the progress of a river. If we trace it to the fountain-head, how small and contemptible is its beginning: still it flows onward with a determined course, increasing as it flows,—here wandering through sunny meads and pleasant groves, decked with flowers and filled with the music of a thousand birds; there through trackless and barren heaths and desolate moorlands, often tumbling over rude

barriers of rocks; now tranquillized, it reflects the giant trunks and towering branches of venerable oaks that form the leafy skirts of some vast forest, and now the turrets, spires, and battlements of some noble city, tinged by the setting sun-gleam, in its limpid waves,—till swollen to a broad and mighty flood, its waters are lodged in the bosom of the boundless ocean! How striking the resemblance to him, who by continued perseverance and application to study, surmounts the obstacles and difficulties of his situation; and still pressing forward and daily advancing in wisdom and knowledge, he at length emerges from the chilling depths of obscurity into the broad sunshine of honour and renown.

I have lately met with an old story-book, in which a young prince is made to fall in love with a shepherdess. He leaves his regal home through fear of parental resentment, and gives up a kingdom for his love. But in the end she proves to be the daughter and heiress of a king, and his generous sacrifice is amply compensated. I am so charmed with the purity and devotedness of this attachment, that I have actually begun a Tragedy on the subject. Now don't laugh at my presumption: remember Shakspeare (whom I, alas, have never yet had the felicity to read, ex-

cept a few leaves of his *Merchant of Venice*, which by chance I one day met with in the house of a poor woman), was a deer-stealer, and ran away to London; there, it seems, he held horses for people at the playhouse doors, till through the interest of a kinsman, who was an actor, he obtained a situation within the walls.—So who can tell what your friend's humble muse may yet achieve?—But I must now conclude, and

Remain, dear Frank,

Yours most sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER II.

L—— Parsonage.

DEAR FRANCIS,

I HAVE good news to tell you. Some lines on the Evening Star, which I have written since your departure, about a fortnight ago fell into the hands of a Captain Forbes, who resides at a signal-station in this neighbourhood. I understand he has expressed himself much pleased with them, and wishes to see the Tragedy which a relative of mine told him I was writing. By the bye, I said to my precise old maiden aunt the other day in the garden, that I was determined to write a play: on which she absolutely screamed with horror, overset three or four flower-pots filled with her choicest plants, and nearly fainted on a bed of young sprouting asparagus. As soon as she recovered, she made a cruel vow, that if I attempted to commit so wicked a deed, she would, at her death, neither leave me the old-fashioned gold seal, on which are engraven the arms of our family, that by her account was many years ago of some consequence and affluence, nor the neatly

folded large piece of parchment, which she keeps as sacred as an antiquarian would the glass-beads and brazen spear of an ancient Briton, wherein I understand (for I have never yet been permitted to open it) are bequeathed many posthumous gifts by an ancestor of ours to different charities, &c., in the ancient and royal borough of Corfe Castle; which sacred document of my forefathers' respectability had been in the family more than a hundred and fifty years.

I am compelled to break off abruptly. A messenger is just arrived from Captain Forbes, who wishes to see me this afternoon. Is not this good news? Who knows, my dear Frank, what great things may result from the interview. This may be the person ordained to rescue your friend from obscurity, and introduce him into a new world. Adieu. Expect to hear from me again very soon, and believe me

Yours truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER III.

L—— Parsonage.

DEAR FRANK,

I HAVE seen, conversed, and drank tea with Captain Forbes. But I must tell you, in the first place, that his character is considered very bad here; for he has under his protection a female, who occasionally comes to reside with him at the signal-station, though she seldom continues more than a month or five weeks at a time. He has a singularly curious countenance, void alike of every expression or intelligence; he squints terribly, is of short stature, and when he speaks has a most unharmonious squeak. But all this is nothing to me. He seems a man of much knowledge, has a great taste for poetry, plays charmingly on the german-flute, and talks delightfully of men and manners in that world to which I am as yet a perfect stranger, but with which I most ardently pant to become acquainted. He read to me some of his translations of Horace during the evening; but, between ourselves, that author seems to have lost nearly all his beauties in the

new dress the Captain has put him into. And yet he must be a much better judge of composition than I am, and no doubt his work has merit, though I have not sufficient wisdom to find it out. Be that as it may, the Captain seems much pleased with my Tragedy, as far as I have gone with it. I have entitled it *The Unhappy Shepherdess*,—a title which he says is too indefinite, and must be changed. It is likewise, it seems, a great deal too long. Now he refers me to Horace, who says in his *De Arte Poet.*,

> "Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu
> Fabula."— —

The speeches, too, must be of a moderate length; so there is to be fine cutting and slashing. I am afraid, Frank, half my fine lines about the bower of the shepherdess, the flowers and the streams, the sheep and the bees, the blushes of morning and the warbling of birds, and a thousand other pastoral *beauties* must be cut out! However, I will certainly keep in all I can. He is to mark out the redundancies, and I am then to write off a fair copy, which he declares he will very shortly take to London himself, and offer to one of the great playhouses there; and he appears

to hold no doubt of its being accepted, and ultimately succeeding.

My dear Frank, I am sure you will rejoice with me at such cheering intelligence. What a delightful prospect is there opening to the view of your youthful friend, sunk in the lowest depths of obscurity. Who should have dreamt of a patron raised up in this barbarian spot to bring me forward! What transport unspeakable for the unknown village bard to see the announcement of his Tragedy for representation, and that too on the boards of a metropolitan theatre,—to read in the numerous literary journals the copious remarks of the fastidious critic, who whilst he freely points out real or fancied blemishes and defects, does not withhold his meed of approbation, nor deny the o'erwhelming testimony of unqualified applause from a delighted audience. A fig for aunt Bessy's old trumpery seal and musty parchment! Then think, Frank, of the reward. The Captain assures me I shall not receive from the managers less than five hundred pounds! Of course I shall make him a very handsome present out of it, for his trouble of correcting and getting it brought forward; and with the rest I will purchase books, procure instructors in every branch of learning, and by

continued application acquire an inexhaustible fund of knowledge. The Captain has lent me all Shakspeare's works, French and other grammars, and is very kind in instructing me. I have lately much improved in drawing, of which I will shortly send you some specimens, and in the mean time

Remain, dear Frank,

Yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER IV.

L—— Parsonage.

DEAR FRANK,

You seem to think my expectations visionary, and that a short time will convince me of the folly of being too sanguine in my hopes. It may be so. Yet still there is one advantage arising from those ardent feelings; they stimulate me to greater exertions than I should otherwise make, and enable me to accomplish such studies as a more saturnine mind would deem, in my situation, impracticable. You wish me to give you a description of the Captain's signal-station, and its prospects. I will attempt it, such as it appeared to me the last evening I stood contemplating the diversified scene of land and water on the brow of the hill.

The house he resides in is a small building formed of wood, a few paces from the lofty flag-staff on the summit of a conical mountain, constituting part of that chalky range of cliffs that borders the southern coast of Dorset. The prospect it commands is at once interesting and extensive. The sun was slowly setting over the

deep blue hills that bounded the view to the west, whose tops mingled with the radiant clouds beyond the distant towers of the ancient Durnovaria of the Romans, as I issued from the Captain's abode to enjoy this scene of tranquillity, grandeur, and beauty. To the south lay stretched out in ample expanse the undulating ocean, heaving with gentle swell its bosom to the evening breeze. On its azure surface specked here and there with little clouds of milk-white foam, floated the proud ship of battle, shining in the far-off horizon like a lofty tower of stainless marble. The home-bound merchant-vessel, freighted with the gems and spices of the East, or the productions of the new world, crowded its sails to court the weary winds, as if eager, after escaping the dangers of quicksand, storm, and surge, once more to touch its native shores; while half viewless in the many-coloured glories of the western sky, that tinged the waves with a sanguine radiance, the winged bark bound to distant climes and islands far remote seemed to linger on the ocean's utmost verge, to bid a long adieu to the land of its home reluctant. Amid the British Channel to the south-west, appeared with its marble cliffs the Isle of Portland. Along its ample bay in the form of a crescent lay,

half-buried in smoke, the sandy shores and royal town of the far-famed Weymouth. To the north were seen the highly cultivated hills and plains of Dorset, clothed in waving woods, corn, flowers, and perpetual verdure, variegated with dark-brown wilds between; where sleep undisturbed beneath their heath-clad tombs, yet unprofaned by the plough or spade, many of the Celtic and aboriginal warriors of Britain. Towards the east lay in long perspective the white cliffs of the isle, or rather peninsula of Purbeck, which forms a part of the Durotrigian coast. On the summit of its nearest hill, seven hundred feet above the level of the sea, which is constantly undermining its rocky base, frown the strong ramparts of a Celtic camp; and on its promontory that, jutting far into the ocean, seems to defy the fury of dashing breakers and unrelenting tempests, are seen amid the clouds the venerable remains of a chapel dedicated to the once famous St. Aldhelm, where in days of old a monk resided to offer up prayers to the Saint for the safety of passing mariners. The sea again appeared beyond the eastern limits of the Purbeck hills, and the Isle of Wight, with its steep and gigantic rocks that shone like opal towers in the last fading sunbeam, closed the distant pros-

pect; while St. Mary's lofty steeple rising over the dark heath and the silver windings of the Frome, gleamed feebly through the lowland mists that now slowly ascended from lake and marsh.

I sat me down on the side of a large tumulus, that like a green diadem crowns the mountain top. The sun was set. A glowing radiance still illumed the west; the blackbird was singing his last song in the deep valley beneath, the evening winds sighed along the dim hill, and through the stay-ropes of the signal-staff seemed to wail out a lamentation over the grave of the once proud chieftain of renown. Some years ago the tomb or barrow whereon I lay, which is about two hundred feet in circumference and twelve in height, was opened. A little beneath its surface were found, mingled with the earth, a number of burnt human bones, and likewise the bones of several kinds of animals, small pieces of metal, and various other fragments. These, no doubt, my friend, were the remains of unhappy captives and beasts, which had been inhumanly sacrificed to the manes of the illustrious dead at the grand ceremony of interment. In the centre of the barrow, about four feet from the surface, a skeleton was discovered in perfect preservation, lying

with its head to the north, but of such remote antiquity as to crumble into dust with the least pressure; its posture, which was that of a person sleeping on the right side with the feet drawn up, one hand resting on its breast and the other on its hip, prevented it from being accurately measured. On the bosom of the skeleton was deposited a rude urn, empty of everything except a little of the same kind of fine mould that covered the skeleton. It was of the measure of two quarts, and from extreme age presently fell to pieces. This urn probably contained ointments or valuable articles belonging to the deceased, corresponding with Cæsar's account of the British funerals. Near the neck of the skeleton were also found several small round stones of different dimensions, some being not larger than a pea; which, as they were perforated, perhaps once composed some ornament that had been worn by this aboriginal chieftain. Below the skeleton appeared the foundation of the barrow, composed of flints and stones brought from the sea-shore; and beneath this rude bed, was discovered a heap of ashes and charcoal. These were most certainly the remains of the funeral pile that had been erected on the spot, to burn the bodies of the victims offered in sacrifice.

Here might have stood the dismal cage, made of basket-work, which enclosed a number of human captives, to be all consumed alive in the devouring flames:—for such horrid immolations have made part of the funeral rites performed at some of these barrows of the ancient Celtæ, in the hope of rendering propitious the blood-thirsty deities of the Druids, or giving rest to a "discontented shade"; and such were the cruel offerings of the Greeks, at the inhumations of their chief warriors:

"While those deputed to inter the slain,
Heap with a rising pyramid the plain.
A hundred foot in length, a hundred wide,
The growing structure spreads on every side;
High on the top the manly corse they lay,
And well-fed sheep and sable oxen slay:
* * * * * * *
Four sprightly coursers with a deadly groan
Pour forth their lives, and on the pyre are thrown;
Of nine large dogs domestic at his board,
Fall two, selected to attend their lord:
Then last of all, and horrible to tell,
Sad sacrifice! twelve Trojan captives fell!"

By the opening of this barrow, we find confirmed what the author of the History of Manchester asserts:—namely, that the Britons had two different rites of burial; that of burning the dead and

then collecting their ashes in rude urns of clay, and also of burying them entire, as in the present instance.

"Here then," sighed I to myself, as I lay enfolded in the light skirts of the ocean clouds that floated athwart the twilight hill, "is the last resting-place of some mighty warrior, the mountain tomb of some great chieftain, who in his day and generation won renown among his savage tribes, and to the ringing of whose brazen shield the azure-tinctured warmen rushed to battle. But though the tale of his achievements is past away with his name into eternal oblivion, yet his narrow dwelling of death is still seen on the lofty and isolated hill by the sheep-boy as he folds his evening flock on the verdant downs, and the home-bound mariner, who marks the spot with joy as his vessel lightly tops the bounding billow; while his simple mound of flowery turf hath survived the splendid tombs of Babylon, the mausoleum of Caria, and the far more recent sepulchres of the Cæsars! Wide o'er the ocean did the flames of thy funeral pyre fling their lurid light, as on the shields of painted warriors thy body was borne amid the wailful procession, to this its last dark home on the mountain. How rang the hollow caverns of the cliffs below with

the shrieks of the wretched captives, destined to appease thy savage manes and accompany thy departed spirit to the land of shadows, as their quivering vitals were laid bare by the knives of the relentless Druids in the wild fury of their religious dementations, or the devouring fire preyed on their scorched and agonized limbs! The shouts of the savage multitude, as they flung rude treasures amid the smoking pile,* filled the insulted skies with their hideous din; and in the pauses of vociferous acclamation rose the deep melodious swell of bardic harps, chanting the honours of the mighty dead; while with their solemn strains mingled the rolling of the ocean-breakers below, and formed a burst of sounds awful, strange, and grandly consonant to the mysterious ceremonies of the bloody inhumation.

Adieu.

* "Their interments," says Richard of Cirencester, speaking of the Britons, "were magnificent; and all things which they prized during life, even arms and animals, were thrown into the funeral pile. A heap of earth and turf formed the sepulchre."

LETTER V.

L—— Parsonage.

My Dear Frank,

You profess to be much pleased with my description of Hambury Hill, and beg to be made acquainted how I first became such an enthusiastic admirer of those goddesses, that tune their celestial harps on the banks of the inspiring streams and fountains which flow amid the ever-blooming shades of Parnassus. I will therefore attempt to give you a brief account of my early days of childhood. I was fond of books almost from the period when first taught by my tender mother to read; well do I remember how, at six years of age, I used to secrete Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress under my pillow when I went to bed, that I might have it to peruse in the morning before any one in the house had risen, the giant stories and other wonders in it delighting me much. I was never fond of play, as other boys generally are, a new book being still to me a fund of entertainment. My mother indulged me to the utmost of her power in such amusements;

at the same time tenderly instructing me in every religious duty. The only playmate I ever had, was a boy of nearly my own age, the son of the then officiating clergyman at Thame, in Oxfordshire. He resided at that time at L—— with his foster-mother, an old lady who took him an infant of a few days old when his maternal parent died, and brought him up as her own son; bequeathing to him at her death, which took place two or three years ago, a handsome property. On his first quitting the village for the distant abode of his father, who himself prepared my young friend for the college, I accompanied him with his foster-mother and sister two or three miles on his journey; and when we parted, *we* who had scarce ever past a day since the first dawn of remembrance without seeing each other, I sat down and wept aloud on the brow of a hill that commanded an extensive prospect of the surrounding country. They were not childish tears of regret at losing the partner of my infantine pleasures that rolled down my cheeks, and bedewed the flowers of the bank on which I lay: No, they were scalding tears of deepest sorrow, not wholly unmingled with envy, that he, companion of my boyhood, partner of my little cares and joys, was gone far away to receive instruction in every branch of

literature; to revel in those delights that a variety of books must always yield, and quaff full draughts of wisdom at the very fountain head; while I was left deserted and sad in a lonely village, without one kind instructor, and with but few books by which I could obtain any knowledge. Mournfully pleasant, my dear Frank, is that spot to me still: often do I throw myself on that very bank, and gaze on the delightful prospect of hill and plain, of forest, purple heath, and verdant grove, with mansion, spire, and cot, and winding flood between, stretching out in sky-bound amplitude on every side; sighing to become acquainted with that world which lies so fair before me, of which as yet I know nothing; where, no doubt, I shall find a thousand kind friends ready to promote my views, where the honoured and the learned will generously press forward to take me by the hand, and realize all my hopes. Often do I sadly sigh, "Lovely flowers, ye bloom on this mossy bank as bright, and smell as sweet as when I lay here and watched, with tear-dimmed eye, the vehicle that bore from me the friend of my childhood slowly ascending yonder hill; till, having gained the summit, it suddenly shot from my aching sight into the vale below, and I saw it no more. The

venerable oak casts over me as cooling a shade, and the voice of the wind through its dark green foliage sings the same soft song of melancholy pity. The distant castle embowered in groves, and the saint-devoted spire on the margin of the blue lake, gleam as brightly in the sunbeam; the ancient Var still pursues its undeviating course in glittering meanders through meads of golden flowers; the skies are hung with clouds as beautiful, the birds fling their music abroad as sweetly, and the notes of the stockdove from yonder woods steal as soothingly on the breeze as in that well-remembered hour. All things seem the same,—and I too, alas! in situation am still the same, though somewhat advanced I trust in intellectual improvement; yet like a plant I vegetate on the same wretched spot. But he who was my playmate, my friend, full fraught with learning's precious store, has embarked on the sunny ocean of life, whose rugged billows the smiles of fortune smooth to sweet tranquillity; whilst I stand mournful on the wild and rocky shore sighing for some far-off land of promise, without the means to spread a sail or lift an oar. But I wander:—let me pursue my story. This friend of my boyhood returned to L—— with every returning summer to visit his foster-mother

and sister. With what exquisite delight was the period of his arrival hailed by me: I have not words to paint the joy of our first meetings. He returned, like a laden bee, with still fresh acquisitions of knowledge, of which he was freely communicative, and by which I endeavoured to profit to the utmost of my power. I now considered myself as rapidly improving; for I could draw tolerably, and had made great progress in arithmetic, grammar, &c. At these happy times, instead of wasting our hours in play, we constantly met together under some apple-tree in the garden, where he would recite to me numberless passages from our best classic authors, which he had studied under his father. He had likewise learnt to deliver dramatic speeches with a just emphasis, correct pronunciation, and due modulation of voice, accompanied with suitable action and gestures, which, with the words, were nearly all new to me. Never can I forget the rapture I felt when some of the beautiful lines of Milton, Thomson, Shakspeare, Pope, and other poets first fell from his lips on my ear. Then it was, my dear friend, that the first dawn of poetic inspiration came upon my transported soul, like the first sweet rays of light to him who, born blind, miraculously becomes endued with the

delightful powers of vision. A new world of beauty, of which till then I never had a glimpse, burst on my sight. I wandered with the Muses in a paradise which, as it were by enchantment, they raised around me; where the groves were filled with flowers that never die, with music that breathes eternal harmony, and where at inspiring fountains I quaffed draughts far more delicious than the celebrated *fons Clitorius*, which was said to be so pure and delightful to the taste, that whoever drank of its nectareous wave had no longer any relish for wine of the richest flavour.

These highly pleasing and annual visits of my friend were continued but a few seasons; he was removed to college, and for some years I saw him no more. I was then wholly left to the guidance of my own studies, and to the wild imaginings of fancy; like a little lonely bark on a rough and darksome ocean, tossed here and there by the veering winds and storms. About fifteen months ago the foster-mother, and five weeks after, the sister of my friend died; when he once more returned hither, to take possession of part of the property to which by their deaths he became the heir. I flew with all my wonted eagerness once again to behold the playmate of

my childhood, the friend of my youth, the instructor to whom I fancied myself under so many literary obligations. Alas, instead of the open-hearted boy, who used to fly laughing with tears in his eyes like the rosy morn of May, to welcome me to his outstretched arms, I met a young man stiffened up in the extreme of fashionable mourning, who with a kind of haughty condescension held forth his hand to my eager grasp, the effect of which seemed to shock his delicate nerves. So changed was his person, so altered his conversation, which was a strange mixture of pedantry, foppishness, and affectation; so cold, so ceremonial, his manners, that I shrunk disgusted and astonished, inwardly exclaiming "Can this indeed be my old friend, whom I so much esteemed? No longer do I marvel at his studied neglect, in never condescending to drop me a line, at his never inquiring after my fate." Chilled to the very soul with his frigid indifference and affected forgetfulness of former days, I soon prepared to retire. Our parting was more cold, if possible, than our meeting. Contempt and bitter sorrow mingled with my feelings: a scalding tear fell involuntarily from my eye on his hand, as he carelessly held it forth with a "Good morning, Mr. ——." It spoke volumes. It was

the last warm tribute to our former friendship, past with the dreams of childhood ;—a friendship that I would not have bartered for a dukedom. I saw a momentary smile of disdain stir the listless apathy of his countenance, on which insensibility did "cream and mantle like a standing pool." A burning arrow seemed to transfix my soul. I hurried from his presence, resolved never more to seek the society of one whose heart, notwithstanding all the learned lumber of his head, was so totally lost to those generous and godlike feelings, that render man the noblest work of his omnipotent creator. But let me put an end to another long epistle, and subscribe myself

Yours ever sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER VI.

L—— Parsonage.

DEAR FRIEND,

WOULD you believe it? The story on which I originally founded my Tragedy of *The Unhappy Shepherdess*, is the very same as that on which Shakspeare has written his play of *The Winter's Tale*, and is to be found in *The Pleasant History of Dorastus and Faunia*. I made this discovery some little time since, on reading through the works of the immortal bard. Is not this very singular? I vow I feel disposed to draw from this curious circumstance a favourable omen of future literary fame, by determined perseverance and industry. But I have made so many alterations in the plot of my drama, that scarce any thing remains of the original composition.

Now, between ourselves, I shall presume to hazard a few remarks on some manifest inconsistencies of our most deservedly illustrious bard,—the prince of dramatic poets. Is it not strange, that Shakspeare should be either so ignorant or regardless of the geographical situation of

countries, as to make Bohemia a maritime kingdom? and Antigonus to say, when he enters with a child and a mariner, in scene iii. act iii.,

"Thou art perfect, then, our ship hath touch'd upon
The deserts of Bohemia?"

He is equally regardless of the customs, mythology, and manners of different nations and ages, as of geography; or he would have given a very different colouring to the religious rites, usages, &c. of his Danes in the tragedy of *Hamlet*. According to Saxo-Grammaticus, the celebrated Danish historian, Amleth, who is the Hamlet of Shakspeare, was the ninth king of Denmark; while the birth of Christ he places immediately after Frotho, the twenty-third king of that part of Scandinavia. How inconsistent, then, does it seem with the manners and pagan rites of those remote and ignorant ages, to hear Marcellus talk of "brazen cannon," and of

"Shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week."

To find Horatio so well taught in Roman history, as to tell you what happened when "the might-

iest Julius fell;" and to hear him talk like an ancient Greek of

> " The moist star,
> Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands."

Then for Marcellus to say a little after, speaking of the ghost,

> " It faded on the crowing of the cock.
> Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
> Wherein our *Saviour's birth* is celebrated,
> This bird of dawning singeth all night long,"

will appear strangely absurd, when the action of the piece is supposed to have taken place ages before the Messiah's appearance on earth. Hamlet is learnedly familiar with the classical mythology, from beginning to end; and his father's ghost (whom one may allow to have gained some information after its abrupt dismissal from its late habitation of clay) complains bitterly of the torments of purgatory, where he is doomed

> " To fast in fires,
> Till the foul crimes, done in his days of nature,
> Are burnt and purg'd away."

While he seems as deeply to regret being cut off

without benefit of clergy, as any modern Catholic could do; that is, dying without a participation of the last rites of the Romish Church: for the administration of the eucharist, extreme unction, and the tolling of the knell, I conceive to be the meaning of this, as it now stands, unintelligible line,

"Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd."

Housel is an obsolete verb, to give or receive the eucharist, from the Saxon word *husel*, the Lord's supper. I therefore am induced to think, that Shakspeare originally wrote this line as follows:

Unhousel'd, unanointed, and unknell'd,

by which is clearly meant the last rites paid to a dying communicant in the ancient church. A play is got up in the Danish court by Hamlet, with the intent of detecting his uncle's guilt. Ancient classical customs and modern manners here seem to be united, and given to a people whose habits were wholly warlike and piratical, and who must have been totally ignorant of all such intellectual sources of refined pleasure; or even had the arts of the drama been known to them, would not such amusements have been

despised as insipid, useless, effeminate, and far beneath the genius of a nation whose highest glory was eternal war and plunder?

It is needless, after this, to mention poor Ophelia's singing about St. Valentine's day; or her funeral, at which the priest says,

> "Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
> As we have warranty: her death was doubtful;
> And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
> She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
> Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
> Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.
> Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,
> Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
> Of bell and burial."

How contrary this to the practice of the Northern nations, whose celebrated god, Odin, excluded from his paradise all women who did not perish by a violent and voluntary death; consequently, poor Ophelia, with all imaginable magnificence and barbaric cruelty, should have been consumed to smoky ashes on the funeral pyre, amid piles of bleeding victims, offered up to accompany her spirit into the splendid halls of Valhalla.

Instead of introducing the manners, usages, and religion of ages so long after the period of

its action, had such an universal and unequalled genius as Shakspeare's given us in his drama the true habits and manners of the Scandinavians, with those awfully grand and magical ceremonies of their wild faith, what passages, nay, whole scenes of purely original and sublime poetry, should we not have found in *Hamlet!* But there are few dramatists, that I have met with, who are not liable to the same censure as Shakspeare, in what respects a due keeping, and of which our great bard seems as totally regardless, as of the classic unities and rules laid down by the ancients. If in an epic poem one of its greatest beauties be to describe faithfully the manners, usages, and religious rites of the nation and age in which the action of the poem takes place, a due attention to each of these particulars, must be equally indispensable in a dramatic poem.

But to return to myself. I must tell you my father is become such an enemy to every thing of a literary nature, that I am compelled to write in private. I carry my apparatus for that purpose always about me, and compose at every opportunity which I have under the garden-hedge, and behind the stables and the barn. There I studied the greater part of my Tragedy, and there do I often stand shivering in the wintry sunshine,

while I sigh over my MSS. and exclaim, "Will this *cacoëthes scribendi* ever be of advantage to me? When shall I emerge from these depths of obscurity?" My dear friend, what Alpine steeps have I yet to climb! How beautifully does Pope describe the toil of those, who would arrive at the summit of Fame:

"Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts;
While from the bounded level of our mind
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind.
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise.—
So pleased at first the towering Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales and seem to tread the sky.
Th' eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last:
But those attained, we tremble to survey
The glowing labours of the lengthened way;
Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

Once more adieu!

LETTER VII.

L—— Parsonage.

DEAR FRANK,

I HAVE the pleasure to inform you that Captain Forbes is about to be made one of the poor knights of Windsor, and will in future reside at that magnificent castle. He intends staying in London a short time before he sets off for his final residence. I have been busily employed of late in writing off a fair and improved copy of my Tragedy;—all done by candlelight in my own bedroom, after the rest of the family were asleep. Captain Forbes will take this copy with him to town, and present it to the managers. He promises to visit, on my account, several of the great literary characters in the metropolis, and to procure me a situation in some respectable office. How I long for the hour of his departure! Yet were it not for the certain hope of soon following him to London, how melancholy would that hour be to me;—for much am I indebted to him for his counsel and instruction, and many a winter evening have I passed pleasantly in his society. In one of our latest interviews, he favoured me with

a copy of the following letter from himself to —— Erskine, Esq., late of W——, in Dorsetshire, which I now give you *verbatim et literatim.*

"SCENE, *a Cavern.*

ELMINIA *alone.*

No further can I go. O, cruel chains,
That bind me to this dismal cell of wo!
And have I changed the lovely fields and groves,
Replete with odours, music, fruits, and flowers,
For this grim den and doleful solitude?
Ye banks of strawberry-flowers and violets blue,
Ye rosy bowers, and oak-o'ershadowed lawns,
Where at the dawn
And evening grey I loved to lead my flocks,
And listen to the woodland melody
Of birds and fountains warbling to the sun,
Rising or setting in a golden sky,
Farewell awhile;—farewell, perhaps, for ever!
How dismal is this place!—
I tremble at the whistling of the wind:
My shadow, scarcely visible, alarms me,
And the faint echoes of my trembling voice
Make me to start with fear! Here midnight shades,
Dark as the chambers of the grave, do frown,
Save the pale glimmerings of yon feeble lamp
Which on me casts a wan sepulchral ray,
And adds a deeper horror to the scene.
O, my loved lord, haste with a gallant troop,
And bear me from this dungeon far away
To that delicious vale, where I have spent

So many tranquil hours of joy with thee.—
He hears me not, nor knows my cruel fate.—
Perhaps in this abhorred abode I'm doomed
To dwell, till death releases me; and I no more
Shall my adored Almanza's face behold.*

The above is a specimen of young ———'s Tragedy which he some time since put into my hands. As you could scarcely believe what I told you respecting the youth, his merits, and his not having ever been within the walls of a school or a theatre, and declaring if such really were the case Shakspeare himself was unequal to him, I thought proper to send you a speech of his principal female character, that you might judge for yourself. In my opinion, the lines do not surpass the bounds of nature. They evidently exhibit a plenitude of feeling, and a surprising imagination for one of his years and scanty acquirements. If you can prove it a compilation, I will burn the manuscript. With respect to ideas, men in different countries and ages have formed the same; therefore it is the composition that charms the heart, as one piece of music does another.

I am, dear sir,
Yours most sincerely,
HAY FORBES."

Excuse this short letter: the next will, I trust, contain still better news. Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

* This is the only fragment of my first Tragedy which I have remaining: of the plot I now remember little or nothing. I lost the MS. in my after wanderings, and was never able to recover it.

LETTER VIII.

L—— Parsonage.

DEAR FRANCIS,

I HAVE been waiting a long time, in anxious expectation of hearing from the Captain. Since his departure I often take an evening walk, lonely and sad, ruminating on my present, and indulging gloomy forebodings of what may be my future lot in life. Frequently do I cast a melancholy glance towards the mountain of my instructor's late abode, canopied with the rosy radiance of expiring day, that in its transient glory seems to image forth the fleeting fame of the once mighty Celtic chieftain who sleeps on that hill-top, forgotten and unknown. Once, renowned in arms, he lifted his painted shield amid the ranks of the valiant, and died his two-handed sword in the blood of kings. Long were his deeds of warfare rehearsed in the songs of bards, and the silvery sounding strings of the harp rung with his chivalry. But the might of his arm is forgotten, and his glory past away, even as the last faint purple gleam fades above his bier; while his memory, like the tomb of the mountain,

is shrouded in dimness and clouds. What! though no sculptured marble, hung with trophies of conquest, adorn the once proud chieftain's grave; what! though no magnificent cathedral's swelling pillars, decked with escutcheons, helms, and blood-died banners, fling their fretted and lofty arches over thy mouldering ashes, through which the choral strains of the evening hymn roll their rich tide of melody; yet, while monuments of stone and iron crumble to dust with the lapse of ages, thy simple mound of grassy turf, O chief of other days, remains entire; and the everlasting mountain, far more vast and lofty than the pyramidal tombs of Egyptian kings, is thy sepulchre, o'ercanopied with the spacious and azure dome of heaven, which morn and evening suns with richest imagery, surpassing earthly tints, adorn! The skylark carols o'er thee his matin lay, as from the shepherd's upturned eye he, soaring, melts to air, and below thy mountain-pillow the ocean lifts his sonorous voice in wild and solemn music: while the moon as she departs the chambers of the sky, ever stoops from her cloud of brightness, as though thou wert Endymion there inurned, to kiss thy daisied grave, o'er which she, lingering, sheds her latest ray.

But thou art forgotten, and thy name perished

from the records of men! So, perhaps, shall I be unremembered by my late kind patron amid the gay circle of his polished acquaintance, unthought of amid the hurry, the bustle, the amusements, and dissipations of London. Yes! sunk in obscurity, I shall fade like a lowly flower of the desert, like a feeble exhalation of the marsh, unheeded and unknown, and all my ardent aspirations after fame and immortality will perish in the dust; while not a ray of after glory shall linger o'er the humble turf that hides my cold remains, to guide some kind pilgrim to the lonely churchyard, there to sigh

"Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre."

Such were my reflections last evening; when, returning home, to my great joy I found a letter waiting for me from the Captain. With what agitation of mingled hope and fear did I break the seal! Ten thousand thanks for his kindness: he has not forgotten me. He has procured me a situation; but of what kind he does not say. No doubt it is one well suited to my capacity and inclinations, and with which I shall be highly

pleased. I am to set off for London with all imaginable expedition, and my next shall give you an account of my journey and arrival in the great metropolis of the British empire.

I am,

Yours affectionately,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER IX.

London.

My Dear Friend,

My mother considerably delayed my intended journey to town, through extreme reluctance to part with me, and tender solicitude for my future fate in life; though, as you well know, it is high time I should have some employment or profession. At length, after much persuasion and entreaty on my part, and many sighs and tears on hers, I obtained her blessing and consent, and bade adieu, for the first time, to my native village. The hope of success, the joy of emerging from obscurity, and the novelty of my journey, left in my bosom little room for sorrow or regret as I lost sight of home. No tie, save filial affection, connected me to the spot, and I left no companion or friend, unconnected by blood, for whom I could heave a single sigh.

With a light heart I soon reached the great western road, that leads from the very end of the peninsulated duchy of Cornwall to the chief city of the Britons. I could not but contemplate it

with mingled emotions of joy and fear. It seemed like the hand of a friend stretched forth to introduce the long-concealed village-youth into the bustle, the pleasures, the cares and the dangers of a new, an untried world. To what may not my first step towards it lead? thought I; perhaps to pleasure, honour, and fame: yet should misconduct and error guide my feet, and treachery and strong temptation assail me on my way, it may conduct to disappointment, misery, and perdition. But smiling hope bade me still turn to the fair side of the picture. There seemed to be a more than wonted brightness in the sun, as he flung his rays of splendour o'er the landscape that bloomed around me. Nature appeared to assume new beauties, the flowers to put on a richer glow, and the birds from every tree and bush to congratulate me in their songs; while all things gave a presage of approaching happiness and prosperity. Dreams of future greatness swam before my eyes, and visionary prospects of renown bewildered my giddy senses. O, I felt like a glad captive, who having pined away long years of sorrow within the gloomy walls of a dungeon, is suddenly restored to light and liberty.

From the brow of the hill where first I entered

the great road, I turned back to take a farewell view of the long range of cliffs that bound the southern coast of Dorset, a part of which, crowned with the green circles of an ancient camp, rises above my native village. "Farewell," cried I, "vale of my youth! farewell, ye mountains and cliffs, where I have so often wandered sighing for that far-off world into which I am now just going to enter. A soft regret still lingers about my heart as I take a last view of your dim blue lines, mingling with the purple-tinted clouds of ocean. There is one tie that still binds me to you with cords of love:—a mother, a fond mother, dwells beneath your lofty summits, who at this moment is breathing, with tear-dimmed eye, from her inmost heart, a prayer for the protection and prosperity of her son, her only son, gone forth to dwell with strangers."

The coach now came by. I mounted its top, and soon lost the distant scene I had just been contemplating. Every turn of the wheels gave fresh exhilaration to my spirits. We seemed to fly along with the rapidity of birds on wing. Laughter appeared to dwell on the lips of my fellow travellers, and pleasure beamed in every eye. We past over vast downs on which were scattered numerous tumuli of various dimensions,

and crossed what once was a steep rampart and ditch, part of which running up the sides and along the tops of certain hills remain entire. This was, no doubt, one of the boundaries of the ancient Belgæ, who invaded and settled in the southern parts of England long before the coming of Julius Cæsar.

It was at the set of sun that I arrived within sight of Salisbury. The vastness and grandeur of its cathedral, with the beauty and amazing height of the spire, impressed my mind with a pleasingly melancholy reflection on our ancestors and their architectural skill, which raised temples of such vast magnitude and solemn magnificence; whose lofty aisles and choirs adorned with blazoned arms, streaming ensigns of warriors who have for ever laid the shield and lance aside, and mouldering monuments of the long-since mouldered dead, are so well adapted to devotion and pious meditation, that lift the soul to God. From the brow of the hill that overlooks the city, I caught a transient view of the castle-hill and ramparts of Old Sarum. Alas, how vain, how idle the pomp and splendour of this world! Its boasted honours pass away like a shadow, and its glory like the radiance of an evening cloud! "Is that," sighed I to myself, "the once magni-

ficent Sorbiodunum of the Romans, thronged with palaces, castles, temples, and towers; where dwelt Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine the Great, and through whose lofty gates the emperors of the world have passed in splendid triumph? How art thou fallen, city of renown, who satest the queen of nations! To thy tapestried halls did the haughty Norman conqueror summon all the powerful chiefs of England's fair provinces, there to pay him homage and swear allegiance to his despotic rule. Thy palaces, thou lofty city of the south, were wont to be thronged with the princes and the nobles of the land: but thou art become desolate; thy glory is departed, and no one dwelleth in thee! In thy council-chambers the senators of Albion have oft times met to hold solemn consultation; and the priestly hierarchy assembled in sacred synod, to promulgate laws of state and religious ordinances through the wide dominions of Britain. In thy stately wine-chambers emperors and kings once held sumptuous banquets, and the voice of the viol and the harp poured melodious enchantment o'er the feast. But thou art cast down from thy high place; the gilded banners of regality no longer float on thy walls; thy gates are broken

down, thy towers dismantled, and thy temples and palaces razed to their foundations! Where all the gods of Rome with splendid festival and martial games were devoutly worshipped, and beasts of prey brought from distant regions fiercely combated, and savage gladiators won bloody and inhuman victories, amid the repeated shouts of crowded amphitheatres; where gloried deeds at tilt and tournament have been achieved, and chivalry by its romantic bravery won smiles and cheers from a thousand female beauties, that like a parterre of roses and tulips crowded the scaffolds erected around the lists, the rustic shepherd now folds his evening flocks, and the grasshopper chirps its monotonous song to the rising moon!

With thoughts like these I entered Salisbury: night was fast approaching. We changed coaches as well as horses, and by the morning light we had passed far away o'er mountain, moorland, heath, and plain, and began to nigh the vicinity of the metropolis. But I must conclude. My next shall inform you of all that has transpired since my arrival respecting him, who still continues,

Dear Frank,

Ever yours,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER X.

London.

DEAR FRIEND,

I AM totally at a loss to find words by which to express the effect my first entrance into London had on my senses. I thought myself in town long before we reached Hyde-park corner; I however endeavoured, as well as I could, to keep my surprise to myself, for fear of being laughed at by my fellow travellers. The grandeur of the buildings, the length of the streets, the splendour and number of carriages rolling to and fro, the immense multitude of all kinds of vehicles moving every way, the costly and beautiful appearance of the shops, and the crowds of elegantly dressed people on every side, so dazzled my sight and bewildered my senses, that I, who had been ever accustomed to wild and trackless heaths, lonely forests, mountains untrod save by the shepherd, cliffs and rocky shores seldom frequented except by the solitary fisherman or crafty smuggler, felt an unusual palpitation at my heart without scarcely knowing what I did or said to those about me. It seemed as though, during my late

sleep in the coach, I had been conveyed by magic power into another world, whose inhabitants, in their manners, customs, and appearance were equally new, and where all was boundless magnificence, festivity, and pleasure.

I contrived, when I got out of the coach, to preserve my trunk and other things from the marauders about the office; and according to the Captain's instructions in his letter, called a hackney-coach, bidding its driver take me to a certain number at the Seven-Dials, I threw myself into it, ruminating as deeply as the still changing scenery around me would permit, on the reception I should meet with at my new situation. As I had never shown the Captain's letter to any of my relatives, who might have apprised me of its local character, I was wholly ignorant of the place to which I was now with unutterable anxiety swiftly approaching. The Seven-Dials:—perhaps a name given to some great office belonging to Government; or still more probably the mart of literature, and the resort of the first philosophers, astronomers, and poets of the age: the temple of science and the altar of the muses: happy should I be even to become a door-keeper in such an abode! These and similar ideas had now quite absorbed all my

powers of thinking, when the coach suddenly stopped; the door was opened, the steps lowered, and the coachman holding up his bended arm exclaimed, "This is the number, sir." I quickly descended from my seat, and to my unspeakable astonishment entered the door of a dirty mean-looking shop, which was crowded with numerous articles of household furniture, mostly in a very shabby condition; while along its front and round the entrance hung, streaming to the tainted winds, a great variety of old and new clothes. A little dark-visaged shabby-looking man now came forward, to whom I addressed myself by inquiring if he knew Captain Forbes, and where he resided. "Captain Forbes," replied he, looking at me from head to foot, with a pair of small piercing eyes full of cunning and duplicity, "yes, I do know him; he lives in Bernard-street, Oxford-road. Ah, ha, I suppose you are the youth in vant of a sitivation from the country, that he spoke to me about. I *did* vant a young man some time ago, 'tis true, to attend in the shop here, and told him I had no objection to make trial of the person he recommended; but he did not come at the time I vanted him, and I am now suited in a lad; and therefore could not take you, if you are the young man he spoke of."

Not the loss of this classical and delightful situation was it, that struck me dumb with astonishment and confusion. No, it was the complete dissolution of all those airy castles, those fine-wrought day-dreams in which I had been so long indulging my hopeful fancy; and I at once feared and dreaded the Captain's inability to realize, in any shape, those prospects which from time to time he had held out to me. The only reply I could utter, was a request to be made acquainted with the Captain's address. "My boy shall go with you," said the man. "Here, William, show this young gentleman where Captain Forbes lodges. This is his card. You may leave your luggage here, if you like, till you have seen the Captain and taken lodgings. I see you are greatly disappointed in having lost such a snug sitivation as this would have been for you. I wish you had come before, myself. I should like to have given you a trial; but you will soon get a place of some sort or other, I dare say, now that you are on the spot."

I accepted his courtesy in taking charge of my things, and set off accompanied by the shop-boy for the lodgings of the Captain, whom I found at home. After the usual salutations, I inquired how he could think of sending for me, after the

expectations he had held out, to fill such a mean paltry situation as that to which he had referred me. "Toot, man," replied he "what signifies the narrowness or mud of the stream you first embark on, so it flows into the ocean of prosperity at last. Why I have known many a bonny lad of my country leave his native mountains bare-footed and barelegged to come to this great town, where they have begun their fortunes with blacking shoes in a corner of the street, till, in due time, by perseverance and industry, they rode in their own carriages and kept their country houses." This was poor consolation to me; but far away, and for the first time, from my native village and comfortable home, by distance and disappointment now rendered far more dear than I ever felt it before, isolated and sorrowful amidst multitudes of the social and the gay, without one friend or acquaintance but himself, my heart was too full to say much.

We now sat down to some refreshment; after which he offered to go with me in search of a lodging, and promised to show me the next day an office, at which by paying a certain sum and entering my name, I might obtain a situation. A lodging was soon procured for me at a grocer's in Chandos-street. He then took his leave, and

as I had had but little repose for two nights before, I lay down on my bed and soon fell asleep. When I awoke it was evening. The streets were illuminated with rows of lamps, the continued rumbling of coaches, chariots, and carts resounded on the rough pavement; the cries of those who visit every court and avenue to sell their different commodities rung shrilly in my ears, the bells of a neighbouring steeple were striking up a merry peal, while a rich-toned organ was chiming forth under my windows a favourite air, which I had often heard a lady play in the shades of retirement. The sudden effect of such a combination of unusual sights and sounds on my half-awakened senses, no words can describe.

But 'tis time I should close. I shall write again as soon as I obtain a situation, be assured; in the mean-while believe me to be,

Dear Frank,

Your faithful friend,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XI.

London.

DEAR FRANCIS,

IMMERSED in the fluctuating confusion of uncertainty, I forgot in my last to say anything respecting the fate of my play, of which you so earnestly inquire. This man, this false friend, for so I must call him, after all the pretensions and golden dreams with which he deceived me, when in the country, has returned the Tragedy without even offering it at either of the houses. He says he has shown it to some literary gentlemen in town, who told him they considered it an astonishing performance for a youth like me, but not adapted for representation. And now, instead of that rapturous delight which I so fondly hoped to enjoy in seeing my piece brought forward before a London audience, and of listening to the welcome plaudits of approbation, my humbled ambition was compelled to accept the compliments and praises of the poor cinder-wench, who lives with the family where I lodge, and whom I caught perusing my MS. one

evening in my room, as I unexpectedly returned home. But this is not the worst. He has never introduced me to a single literary character; nor is he, 'tis my belief, acquainted with any. I walk many miles every day, in search of some employment; but without success. My little stock of money is daily wasting, I cannot bear the thought of returning to be laughed at; and to remain here much longer, without a situation, is impossible. Pray that a gracious providence may appear in my behalf! My anxiety and agitation are such that I can write no more at present: expect soon to hear from me again; till then

Adieu!

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XII.

London.

DEAR FRIEND,

I MET the Captain, yesterday morning, crossing Oxford-road in a great hurry. He scarcely gave me time to tell him of my repeated failures in obtaining anything like a suitable situation, and my consequent melancholy and distress of mind; when, abruptly stopping me, he exclaimed, "I am very sorry, but I hav'nt a moment to lose. I am summoned to Windsor, and must go down this morning; as in a few days I am to be installed in my knighthood at the Castle. I hope you will soon hear of something that will suit. I know you are reluctant to return to that d—d low-life village; and as you find it difficult to get, unpatronised, into any kind of office, I would advise you to try for a place as a servant in some family, till something better turns up; and being just from the country, many, no doubt, would be glad to have you. You can refer to me at Windsor, you know, or to Dr. Gibson of Saint James's street, to whom I introduced you one evening at my lodgings. I wish you every

success: the Windsor coach is just going to start; so good morning, and fare you well." For my own part I stood like one rivetted to the spot, having lost all power of speech. With a heart swelling with indignation and grief, I watched him amid the passing crowd, till the corner of a street shut him from my view. "Is this," sighed I deeply to myself, "the man whom I thought so exalted in honour and nobleness of soul above ten thousand? to whom I looked up with reverence and attachment as to one of extraordinary abilities, and superior attainments in literature and science? Is this the man I so much respected as my only patron; my friend, who had promised to rescue me from the chilling shades of obscurity, lead me into the sunny and primrose-scattered path of knowledge, and plant me where my procreant talents, by assiduity and attention, might one day reap a full harvest of fame and emolument? Good God! and is it come to this? To be tempted by false promises from my quiet home, and then left, almost without resources, in these strange scenes of confusion, dissipation, temptation, and danger; and worse than all, recommended to wear a livery! Are these the pleasures and enjoyments of that world, with which I sighed so long to become ac-

quainted? Is this a specimen of the vaunted friendship of mankind?

With thoughts such as these, I wandered along the streets, scarcely knowing what I did, or whither I went. Chance at length led me into St. James's-square, and I resolved at once to call on Dr. Gibson. I found him at home, and unhesitatingly poured into his ear the whole tale of my distress; nor did I fail to paint in proper colours the conduct, throughout our acquaintance, of my *soi-disant* patron. The Doctor seemed much hurt at his countryman's behaviour, and reprobated in strong terms his encouraging me to come to London, under the false appearance of his being a man of extensive influence and superior connexions in the literary world. He seemed at a loss what to advise, and declared it was out of his power to serve me. At length, recollecting he was acquainted with a Mr. Williams, belonging to the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden; and understanding that I was the author of a play, he sat down and wrote a letter, recommending me to him, with which I immediately set off in quest of new adventures. Of the result my next shall inform you.

I am, dear Frank, yours, &c.,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XIII.

London.

DEAR FRANK,

I FOUND Mr. Williams at his lodgings, just returned from the Theatre. He received me with a great deal of friendly politeness; and having learnt my story, both himself and Mrs. Williams shewed me much sympathy and kindness, the effect of which was considerably augmented by the contrast of the Captain's late unfeeling conduct. They wished much to read my Tragedy, and desired me to call the next day; when, Mr. Williams told me, I should have his candid opinion of its merits. At the appointed time I paid a second visit, and was received with still increasing pleasure and hospitality. Mr. Williams informed me he had carefully read my Tragedy through; that it had many passages of true poetic beauty; but as a whole, was not by any means calculated for the stage. "You are very young," continued he, "and possess, I am convinced, such talents for poetry as will, if you continue to improve them, one day rank you

high in the lists of your country's bards. But destitute of literary friends, unacquainted with the manners of the world, without the most distant prospect of suitable employment; no patron or relative to whom you can apply for counsel to direct, or money to support you, and dropped, as it were, from another world into this vast metropolis amid ten thousand dangers, delusions, temptations, and vices of every form and shape, what situation can be so truly unfortunate as yours! Return once more, my dear sir, into the shades of seclusion: return to your friends without delay. When you are again beneath your paternal roof, sit down and compose a new tragedy. I have interest in the Theatre, I know, sufficient to get it brought forward, if it have merit; and that it will have merit I cannot doubt, from the specimen which you have put into my hands of your abilities for dramatic composition. When it is finished, send it up to me, for which I will give you proper directions, and I trust that next season it will be brought out. You may then return to London under very different auspices, and find many friends among the *literati* of the town, who will take you by the hand, and kindly give you instructions for your future course in life."

Delighted beyond expression, with new and now almost certain hopes of soon accomplishing the long-cherished wishes of my soul, I no longer accused the Captain of deception and treachery; but, had he been present, could have thanked him a thousand times for being the cause of my coming to town, since I had thus established a friendly connexion with one of the members of a London Theatre; a step towards certain success which I had before never dreamt of attaining. All my late anxieties and dismal forebodings, arising from repeated disappointments, fled like the shadows of night and their companions the foul birds of omen, at the soft sweet smile that first breaks from the lips of Aurora. The late gloomy shades of retirement, to which I was about to return with even greater joy than I felt at my first quitting them, now appeared to my imagination suddenly transformed to a paradisiacal bower at the very summit of the Aonian mount; where, decked with the fadeless garlands of the Muses, and o'ershadowed by the verdant branches of its groves, I was again soon to study secure from the melting heat of temptation and vice, and beyond the din, confusion, and strife of cities.

As Mr. Williams did not perform that evening, it was arranged for me to accompany him and

Mrs. W. to Drury-Lane Theatre, and the next morning to set off for Dorsetshire. How shall I convey to you, my dear friend, an idea of the effect which the interior of a Theatre-Royal like Drury-Lane had upon me, who never was in a playhouse of any kind before? The spaciousness and glittering magnificence of this Temple of the Muses filled me with a highly pleasing astonishment; and when from the orchestra a full-tide flood of harmony reverberated through the house, filling its vast concavity with sounds that seemed almost celestial, my soul was wrapped in an elysium of ecstasy! The curtain soon after rose, and the piece, which to my great joy was *Macbeth*, instantly began. How much at that moment did I wish you to have been at my side, that I might without reserve have imparted the feelings of delight I then experienced, and given free utterance to remarks on the play and the performers, which modesty would not suffer me to hazard before those who sat near me.

I believe I some time ago informed you how much delight the perusal of *Macbeth* had afforded me: but how was I charmed with this most correct representation of Shakspeare's master-piece. The appropriate scenery, by its dreary heaths, its wild and naked rocks, over which the blue lightnings fling a ghastly light,

that seem indeed the haunts of midnight witches and foul demons of darkness; its Saxon castles and splendid halls of ancient armour; its gloomy caverns, illumined by the pale fires that blaze beneath the cauldron of sorcery, which have all such wondrous powers of illusion; the exact dresses and costume belonging to each character of the age and country wherein the action of the piece really once took place; the terrific effect of those parts where enchantment performs her miraculous delusions, joined to the exquisite and unrivalled acting of a Kemble and a Siddons in the bloody hero and heroine of this most excellent tragedy, all combine to yield the highest classical, rational, and moral entertainment that the mind of man can enjoy.

But it is late, and I must rise betimes to-morrow, and bid farewell to this *altera Roma* of the world.

Adieu! dear Frank,

and believe me yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

P.S. After a pleasant journey I arrived yesterday at L——, and met with a kinder reception from some of my relatives, whom I found all well, than my disappointments in town led me to expect.

LETTER XIV.

L—— Parsonage.

DEAR FRANCIS,

As you so earnestly wish me to give you some account of the antiquities in the county of Dorset, I shall begin with those most venerable and noble remains of Roman architecture called the Amphitheatre, situated at the summit of a gentle declivity about one thousand five hundred feet south-west from the walls of the town of Dorchester, the Durnovaria of the Romans. An amphitheatre is two theatres joined together,*

* Tacitus tells us, that during the government of Agricola, that great commander excited among the inhabitants of Britain a taste for the Roman arts and manners; that their towns were adorned with magnificent temples, porticos, baths, &c. and their youth followed the fashions of Rome. It is also said of Lucius, the first Christian king in Britain, that he converted temples into churches. But the author of an article on *The Progress of Architecture in England*, in one of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazines for 1820, speaking of the early spread of Christianity in the Roman empire, says "this will account for the total extinction, if the term may be applied to what I conceive *never had any existence*, of all theatric monuments of the Romans in the lists of our national antiquities." But the writer of this article must surely be very ignorant, not to know that there are several Roman amphitheatres still existing in England, and one or two in a tolerably perfect state, besides the one of which I have here attempted to give some description. "It is beyond a doubt that King Arthur's *round table* near Penrith, in Cumberland, was a similar work, especially as an evident amphitheatre in Wales, without the walls of Caerleon, goes by that name. This last is level with the surface of the field except to the east, where the bank rises seven feet higher. It is seventy-four yards in

divested of those parts appropriated to the actors and scenes, wherein the seats are continued quite round, and the faces of the audience all directed towards the area or centre; but the ends, says a Latin author, where they are joined, must be drawn out into straight lines, when it becomes an oval, which gives a proper space for the combatants, and a better opportunity for the specta-

diameter from east to west, and sixty-four from north to south, and seven yards deep in the middle; the bottom and sides covered with grass: the sides have a gentle slope, and the proprietor of the ground remembers to have seen a piece of a wall opened, which he took for part of the seats."—*Harris's Account of Roman Antiquities, &c. in Wales, printed Archæologia* ii., p. 6.

There is another at Silchester, the ancient Vindomæ of the Romans; built, as Gildas informs us, by Constantius the son of Constantine the Great. It stands without the walls of the city, great part of which are yet remaining. "The people," says Dr. Stukely, "think it was a castle: I presently discerned it to be an amphitheatre. 'Tis in bulk, in shape, and all points, the same as that at Dorchester; but not built of so solid materials, for 'tis chiefly clay and gravel. The whole area within is now covered with water, and the work must certainly be exceeding solid and well compacted, to retain the water so many years without draining through. 'Tis a most noble and beautiful concave, but entirely overgrown with thorn bushes, briars, holly, furze, oak and ash trees. Surveying the whole could not but put me in mind of that piece of Roman magnificence, when the emperors caused great trees to be taken up by the roots, and planted in the amphitheatres and circs *pro tempore*, to imitate forests, wherein they hunted beasts; which here is presented in pure nature."

There is likewise an amphitheatre near Richborough castle, in Kent, and another near St. Just Penwith, in Cornwall, which is one hundred and twenty-six feet in diameter, and enclosed by a bank seven feet in height from the area, but surrounded without by a ditch which makes its elevation above ten feet. The seats were of stone, and consisted of six steps fourteen inches wide and one foot high. Giraldus also, speaking of the magnificence of Caerleon, confirms what has been said respecting these edifices having been erected in Britain; for he enumerates *theatres* among the other noble buildings of that once splendid Romo-British city.

tors to see every thing performed on the area which is in the shape of an egg. Theatres, in the first ages of the commonwealth, were only temporary and composed of wood, which sometimes tumbled down with a great destruction.

The first regular amphitheatre was built of wood by Cæsar, when Dictator, in the Campus Martius; and the first built of stone was erected in the reign of Augustus, by Statilius Taurus in the same place. Vespasian afterwards began the vast Colosseum, which his son Titus completed. The one of which I intend to offer you some account, is formed of solid chalk, perhaps cut out at first like square stones, then cemented with mortar, and covered on the outside with the green turf; which must render it little inferior to an edifice of stone. The area was originally one hundred and forty feet in diameter, the shortest way, and two hundred and twenty the longest; being nearly as large as the celebrated amphitheatre at Verona, which is said to be one hundred and thirty-six by two hundred and thirty-three; while the immense Colosseum is but one hundred and sixty-three. "The parts of an amphitheatre," says Dr. Stukely, "are these: the *arena* or space within, the scene of action; the *euripus* or river, that generally en-

compassed the verge of it; the *prodium* or parapet at the bottom; the *itinera*, or *viæ*, which were the walks between certain series of seats; the *ascensus*, steps or stairs; the *pulpita*, or *tribunalia*, a sort of covered chair of state; the *cathedræ*, where the senators, foreign ambassadors, and great personages sat; the *gradus* or common seats; the *præcinctiones*, which mean, I suppose, ballustrades; the *auditus*, or *vomitoria*, being the passages from the stairs withinside to the seats, a metaphorical name, from the people pouring themselves through them with violence; the *cunei*, which were the space of seats comprehended between two of those passages, so called from their wedge-like shape; the *porticus* or galleries within, partly for magnificence, and partly for convenience." But several of these divisions more properly belonged to those magnificent amphitheatres built of hewn stone and marble, than to this one at Dorchester; which, notwithstanding, was a very noble work, and like those of superior materials abroad, was placed without the walls of the town for benefit of wholesome air, and capable of containing twelve thousand nine hundred and sixty people. From the prodium is a walk of eight feet broad, gradually ascending from the ends of the longest

diameter to the middle of the building on the shortest diameter, where it reaches half-way up the seats of the spectators, who thence distributed themselves from all sides into them. There is a terrace on the top of the walls twelve feet broad; and a parapet five feet broad, and four high. There were three ways leading up to this: one on each side above the seats of the Emperor and Pretor, and one at the upper end of the work, over the cave or receptacle of the gladiators and wild beasts. From the terrace you behold the towers of Dorchester, surrounded with a belt of verdant groves; to the west of which is a strong Roman camp, considered by Dr. Stukely to have been thrown up by Vespasian, and occupied in after ages by the Danes, when they laid siege to Dorchester. Towards the south appears that most strongly fortified camp called Maiden Castle, the Estiva of the Roman Durnovarian garrison, covering the whole summit of a great hill;* while the mountains to the south, which command a most delightful prospect of land and ocean, with the isles of Portland, Purbeck, and Wight, are covered with Celtic tumuli; where

* I am now convinced that Maiden Castle was originally a hill fortress, or fortified city of the ancient Britons, and not a camp, as commonly asserted, thrown up by the Romans; though after the conquest of this part of the country, it was occupied by that people during the summer.

...h their grassy mounds repose many of the Durotrigian and Danmonian chiefs, who greatly struggled to the last gasp for their country's freedom, and disputed inch by inch the possession of their native soil; with numerous others, who long ere the subjugation or invasion of the British kingdoms slept in peace with their fathers, and whose ashes, rudely inurned, have remained, through all the various revolutions their native land has undergone, amid the triumph and fall of many nations who have grasped successively the island sceptre, inviolate and undisturbed to the present hour.

"Who can behold this noble monument of antiquity without the strongest emotions of pleasing melancholy? How oft have these walls resounded to the intonated shout of savage joy? I behold in imagination again the scenes of other days, and the amphitheatre in all its departed pomp is again filled with its wonted throngs of gleeful spectators. The Romans and Britons mingle in friendly union; the laugh, the shout, the shriek, ring round the vast concavity; the rush of crowds fill the itinera, and the ascensus thunders to the hurried footsteps of eager multitudes. The next seat to the prodium, round which is raised a lattice work

of iron with rollers of wood placed lengthwise, to prevent the wild beasts from climbing up by their circular motion, is filled with senators and Romanized British princes and chiefs; above them, reaching to the itinera, are seated the knights with their glittering torques and rings of gold; while the remaining body of the spacious amphitheatre is crowded to excess with the garrulous and noisy rabble. In the uppermost seats, next the terrace, are arranged the females of different degrees, thus placed remote from the scene of action, that their delicacy may not be offended by too near a view of the gladiators, who are sometimes completely naked. Nor is the terrace itself empty of spectators; the whole walk is thickly covered with the flower of the Roman legions, such sights of cruelty being calculated to inure them to the bloody profession of the sword. Directly above the crimson-hung pavilions of the emperor and pretor, are two elevated platforms on the terrace, each covered by a spacious tent, beneath which the various officers of the Roman bands have taken their stand, to witness the extraordinary feats of ferocious courage about to be exhibited on the sanded area below; while round the parapet of the terrace are large sails, elevated on poles, to

shade the spectators from the burning rays of a meridian sun. The war-voice of the trumpet flings its notes of martial melody on the breeze: twelve lictors and twelve fasces, standard-bearers with eagles and other ensigns of imperial power, enter the amphitheatre, followed by the *Præfectus Augustalis*. and a train of princely courtiers, pretors, and pro-consuls, of towns and provinces: the air is rent with acclamations as the proud chief of the Roman armies moves forward to his covered chair of state; while from his den the roaring of the king of the desert mingles with the shouts of the pretorian cohorts.

The cavern door beneath the prodium is now thrown open; a majestic lion stalks forth, and from his rolling eyeballs flings the lightning of scorn on the surrounding multitude. His appearance, like that of a favourite actor on the stage, is hailed with loud and long applause. Two white bisons of the mountain forest, in the pride and fury of their hearts, rush towards him. Their horns are horns of iron, and from their eyelids dart sparkles of fire. They bellow with maddening fierceness, and plough up the sands with their horny hoofs. The monarch of the forest lashes his sides with his tail, then fastens n the shoulder of the foremost bull. The

crooked horn of the other pierces the neck of the lion. Blood flows in streams. The roaring of the beasts is as the roaring of the ocean wrapt in a tempest. But there are scenes more dreadful yet:—men are brought forward to combat with the most savage beasts of the forest; and their blood mingles as it flows together. And see! the gladiators all march in solemn and pompous order round the area of the circus, and now are matched, according to their strength and art, to join in fell and deadly feud. They flourish their arms, and try their practised skill with harmless instruments, till the trumpets sound the war-blast of death, and bid the fatal strife of weapons begin. How the clattering of shield and helmet resounds through the place of slaughter! the fire of clashing swords is like the flashing of the meteor's beams! Their brands are in each others bosoms: death-shrieks pierce the ears of the ruthless assembly: the voice of supplication from the vanquished ascends to them in vain, and the area is strewed with the dying and the dead: while the inhuman shouts of triumph greet the savage victor, and drown the last groans of the expiring!

Such have been the scenes often witnessed within these walls, when the Roman, O Durno-

varia! was lord of thy gates; till Constantine the Great put an end to these barbarities about the year of the city 1067, and nearly six hundred years after their first institution. Thy glory, O thou temple of blood, thou fane of Hercules,* is, like the dominion and might of thy founders, past for ever away! Thy green walls still remain a noble vestige of thy former greatness, but the pomp, nor presence of emperors shall be seen again within thee! The warrior of high renown visits not thy deserted terrace to gain lessons of daring and ruthless courage, and learn to steel his heart against the supplications of a fallen enemy: nor shall the fear-inspiring roar of the wounded lion, or the trump's melodious notes of fire, be ever heard again to awaken the solitary echoes that still linger around thy deep concavity! The shepherd-boy who has heard of some wild legend told of thee, as he folds his evening flock beside thy grass-clad walls,

"Whistles aloud to keep his courage up;"

* Dacier informs us, that it was a custom for all persons when they laid down any art or employment, to consecrate the proper instruments of their calling to the particular deity who was acknowledged for the president of that profession. The gladiators, therefore, when discharged, hung up their arms to Hercules, who had a temple by every amphitheatre; and where there was no amphitheatre, in circos; while in every place appropriated to such manly performances, there stood a Hercules with his club.

then starts to hear the scream of night-bird flitting by, and hurries homeward across the plain as the last rosy tint expires in the west; leaving thee to unbroken silence, solitude, and those dim shadows that still, amid the hours of darkness, love to linger about the mouldering remains of ancient greatness.

I am, dear Frank,

Yours, &c.,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XV.

From Mr. Williams to Sylvaticus.

London.

SIR,

I WAS favoured with yours, and should have answered it much sooner; but my time has been very much occupied in the discharge of my professional duty. I have perused your prologue with attention, as also our friend Dr. Gibson; who, with myself, pronounce it to be a good specimen of rising genius. There are some words which are not quite clear to me, such as "many a gleam:" I think the word *many* stands in need of a substitute, as I think it too faint. If you can throw a little more sublimity in, it would be for the better. We have Mr. Kemble with Mrs. Siddons, &c. coming to our house next season; so I hope you will have strong leading characters for them, as much will depend on their exertions. My interest is also much increased since I saw you, so as to leave no doubt on my mind of the success of your piece, provided (as I observed before) it has merit.

We close here on the 22d instant, though I do not mean to leave town till near the end of the month. Should you not be ready with your piece at that time, it will come safe to hand by directing it for me, to the care of Mr. Cross, Blue Posts, Holborn. I wish it could arrive before I leave, as I wish to have it perused by some gentlemen in the country for their opinion. Mrs. W. with myself remain, sir,

Your respectful friends
and well-wishers,
J. WILLIAMS.

LETTER XVI.

L—— Parsonage.

My Kind Friend,

You seem impatient at my not writing to you for so long a time. Pray consider how I have been engaged since my return from town, and how incessantly I have laboured, night and day, to get my Tragedy ready before the season commences at Covent-Garden. I believe I forgot to tell you that I formed my plot, and wrote many lines of this new piece during the interval of Captain Forbes's leaving L——, and my journey to London.

As I know that to peruse my poor compositions always affords you pleasure, I enclose the prologue and plot* of my new Tragedy, for your amusement and opinion.

PROLOGUE.

A youth, amid those bright immortal bowers
That on the fount of Castaly their flowers
Perpetual shed in rosy-blooming showers,

* The plot of the Tragedy having been written on a separate paper is lost.

Far from his native vale delighted strayed,
Where ignorance in the lap of folly played,
And vulgar Pride, with her side-glancing eye,
Smiled scornful on his low obscurity.
There, in Aönid's mountain groves, he long
Enraptured hung o'er the sweet Muses' song;
But to Melpomene's soul-stirring lyre,
Which numbers breathed of pure celestial fire,
He listened most:—and here would fain impart,
Those strains which touched so deep his aching heart!
Her harp he seized, and o'er the golden string
The wild Enthusiast dared his hand to fling!
Yet how shall he, to village shades retired,
Though with poetic inspiration fired,
Presume to wake that harp of mighty sound,
Which Bards divine have on this classic ground
Swept with a master-spirit, leading all
Your willing souls in sweetly-mournful thrall?
Led by bold Genius to this dreaded shore,
Though fearingly he deprecates the roar
Of rising storms, he dares to claim of you
That meed to noble daring ever due.
O'er the bright scene Renown its sunbeam flings;
Hid are the tempests 'neath the rainbow wings
Of gay Ambition, hovering o'er the deep
Where tranquilly the treacherous billows sleep.
When Shakspeare from these scenes of earth arose,
In glory, to yon skies of blest repose,
Had this bold youth that Bard's bright mantle caught,
He then through untried seas, unskilled, untaught,

Right joyful might have steered for Fame's fair coast,
Fearless of being wrecked or tempest-lost;
And spread that robe of light, his mighty sail,
Of loud applause to catch the favouring gale:
But now he dreads the shore to leave behind,
To brave the trackless gulphs and boisterous wind:
No gentle hand e'er lent its friendly aid,
To rescue him from Oblivion's tenfold shade,
To guide him from his native lonely vale,
The precincts of scholastic light to hail:
To Town he roamed, a wanderer unknown,
Far from his relatives and village home,
By Falsehood lured,—that like the fen's pale glare,
To danger's gulph enticed, then left him to despair!
At length a friend he found, who gave relief,
Dispelled his cares, and soothed his heartfelt grief;
Bade him return with hopes of future fame,
Of honour, wealth, and an immortal name!
To you 'tis given his anxious soul to cheer,
And banish thence desponding doubt and fear;
Though weak his powers to captivate the heart,
To follow Nature in each varied part,
To raise the sigh, cause the sad tear to flow,
And paint the tragic scene's full height of wo,—
Yet come, and with a friendly hand uprear
This bud of Genius,—kindly nurse it here;
Nor doom the blossom on Oblivion's waste
To bloom unseen, crushed by Despair's fell blast:
Preserved by kindness, nurtured by your care,
This simple flower may golden fruitage bear.

How this second dramatic attempt will be approved of, I know not. I have completed the work, and sent it off to Mr. Williams; and now who but a poet can tell the anxiety, the hope, and fear that keep alternate possession of my agitated bosom! But I have other news at present to tell you. The Rev. Mr. B——, of Bristol, whom I well knew when I was quite a boy, is come to reside at W——. He has very kindly renewed our former acquaintance, and has promised to try for a situation for me among his friends at Bristol. So you see I have two or three irons in the fire now.

You know how fond I have always been of Blair's *Grave*, since first I heard some beautiful lines of that poem rehearsed by the quondam friend of my boyhood, of whom I have spoken before. You well know, too, how subject I am, at times, to the deepest melancholy, which has rendered that work, with Gray's most beautiful *Elegy*, and Hervey's *Meditations among the Tombs* to me highly interesting and valuable. I remember I suffered you to read a poem, before you left this neighbourhood, which I had written myself on *The Churchyard*. Some few weeks ago I ventured to send it, considerably enlarged and improved, to the Rev. J. Ball, a clergyman

of a neighbouring village, for his perusal and opinion. Yesterday he returned the MS. enclosing a very polite note; and as I am well aware that you are pleased with every little encouragement given to the feeble talents of your friend, I shall make no apology for troubling you with the following transcript.

Langton, July 6, 18—.

"DEAR SIR,

Herewith I return you the sublime poem you have had the goodness to send me. It certainly has great merit, and does credit to the author. But I hope you will excuse me, when I say it has some grammatical errors: I would therefore advise to let the Rev. Mr. Mosse have the reading of it, as undoubtedly he is a competent judge of poetry, and besides a very polite scholar; or Dr. C——, who is also a man of great science and information. When they have had the revisal of it you may bid defiance to the critics, if it is your intention to publish it. As to the poem entitled *Anthropophagi*, I think it would have been better in rhyme than in blank verse. I do not, I assure you, set myself up as a qualified judge of poetic merit; but as you have appealed to me, I presume to give my candid opinion, and am much obliged to you for the perusal of so entertaining a work.

I am, dear sir,

Your humble servant,

JOHN BALL."

The above is certainly encouraging; particularly to one who has hitherto received so little countenance or support. I believe you do not know that O'Keefe, the celebrated dramatist, resided some years ago for several months in the next village. I was too young to remember any thing of it myself; but it is certain that his *London Hermit, or Rambles in Dorsetshire*, was written in the parlour of the Red Lion Inn, at West L——; and several of the inhabitants have been pointed out to me as included in his dramatis personæ, and who, I am convinced from personal knowledge, were the real originals in that humourous piece. Often have I thought, on my return by night from the signal-station on the adjacent mountain, as I passed by the cottage of a female introduced into that drama, and observed her pale rushlight struggling to fling its feeble rays through the shattered casement, "Little dost thou think, as thou sittest knitting over the dying embers of thy huge and dingy chimney-corner, that thy dress, thy manners, and provincial phraseology are represented to the life amid the blaze and splendour of a London theatre, to the amusement of the rich, the noble, and the learned.—Little dost thou conceive an

unknown immortality shall be thine, when thou art laid low

"Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,"

without any merits, exertions, or wishes on thy part to obtain such distinction. So great is the power of the dramatist and the bard!"—But adieu, my dear Frank, and believe me my friendship for you shall be as immortal as my soul.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XVII.

L—— Parsonage,

My Dear Friend,

I often compare a near relation of mine to old Cato the censor; who, enraged at the eager passion for the Greek philosophy and all kinds of learning, which burst forth with great force among the Roman youth about sixteen years after the decree made by the warlike and unpolished fathers of the Senate, forbidding all philosophers and rhetoricians to appear at Rome, used to pronounce with a voice of thunder to his son, "that the Romans would certainly be destroyed, when they once began to be infected with Greek." But even this rugged fierce barbarian in his old age, it is said, so far repented as to learn the Greek language himself; which Lord Bacon, in his *Advancement of Learning*, says "was a judgment upon him for his former blasphemies." Wondrous changes in minds, as in states, have taken place; and if my exertions to obtain poetic fame should one day, however remote, be crowned with success, perhaps those

who now set me at nought, and consider my unassisted and weak attempts as idle and extravagant, and that what has been said in my praise by two or three friends to be all flattery or ignorance, may, at last, be compelled to change their opinion, become the first to congratulate my success, and do justice to my determined perseverance and industry.

How much do I wish that I had two or three real friends of polished taste and sound critical judgment, on whose advice and assistance I could confidently rely. Not that I should like to adopt the manners of many of the ancient classic poets, who generally borrowed the house of some of their noblest patrons, in which they recited all their new pieces before a large assembly with pomp and ceremony; not so much with the design of improving their works by the critical remarks of their auditory, as to establish their names among the wits of the age, and obtain for themselves the means of support, which some of the celebrated sons of the Muses, even in those days, according to Juvenal, had great difficulty to accomplish, who says of Statius

"Sed cum fregit subsellia versu,
Esurit, intactam *Paridi* nisi vendit *Agaven*."

I should prefer the method which the Romans of rank and wealth always practised, who shine like stars of the first magnitude in the firmament of literature, and emit their immortal beams undiminished from age to age. I mean that of reciting all their compositions, before they ventured to offer them to the public, to a select number of their accomplished friends. What ground for just encouragement, and what an opportunity for improvement must they not have enjoyed when, as they proceeded, every word was duly weighed, every sentence strictly scrutinized, and received the approval and applause of a judicious enlightened taste, or the friendly censure of a polished and unerring judgment! Yet after all, my dear friend, it is by the opinion "of an unprejudiced public, and not of carping, canting, and professed critics, the merit of every performance must be ultimately decided." The ancients were aware of this; for Pomponius Secundus, a celebrated writer of tragedies, when he consulted his critical acquaintance respecting his works, if they differed in opinion with himself about the justness and propriety of his sentiments and language, always exclaimed "*Ad populum provoco,*" as the best deciders of the controversy.

But to return to myself. I know not how it is, but positively I cannot pen a line of either poetry or good sense at certain periods; nay, sometimes I think my Muse has taken her flight back to the Aonian bowers, and will never condescend again to pay a visit to my humble abode. Dr. Johnson calls this, in his life of Gray, "a fantastic foppery, to which my kindness for a man of learning, and of virtue wishes him to have been superior." And again, in the life of Milton, "those temporary and periodical ebbs and flows of intellect, may, I suppose, be justly derided as the fumes of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur astris.* The author that thinks himself weatherbound, will find with a little help from hellebore that he is only idle or exhausted." Yet, relating what Richardson tells of Milton's occasional effusions of imagination, he says, "these bursts of light and involutions of darkness, these transient and involuntary excursions and retrocessions of invention, having some appearance of deviation from the common train of nature, are eagerly caught at by the lovers of wonder. Yet something of this inequality happens to every man in every mode of exertion, manual or mental. The mechanic cannot handle his hammer and his file at all times with equal

dexterity; there are hours, he knows not why, when his hand is out." Thus, so great a man as Dr. Johnson involves himself in a contradiction, when he first asserts these bursts of light and evolutions of darkness to be a deviation from the common train of nature, and then directly says that this inequality happens to every man in every mode of exertion manual and mental. In another place he clearly acknowledges that there are times and seasons peculiarly favourable to poetic inspiration. Justly praising those celebrated lines of Denham, in *Cooper's Hill*,

" O could I flow like thee," &c.

he concludes, " It has beauty peculiar to itself and must be numbered among these felicities which cannot be produced at will by wit and labour, but must arise unexpectedly *in some hour propitious to poetry.*"

My dear Frank, you wish me to write, and I have sent you another long and dull epistle, which I will not lengthen with apologies for being so; but hasten to subscribe myself

Your sincere friend,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XVIII.

DEAR FRANCIS,

I HAVE the joyful news to tell you, that the Rev. J. Banister, of W——, has obtained a situation for me, as a clerk in the office of Mr. J——, solicitor, in Charlotte-street, Bristol. In a few days I shall again bid adieu to L——. I pray God this journey may not prove unfortunate, like the last; but may I meet with a kind reception, and find true friends among strangers.

I am resolved my fondness for poetry shall not interrupt the duties of my new profession; and if my endeavours meet with any encouragement and kindness, it will be my highest delight to study how to please my employer. Excuse this short letter. After my arrival in Bristol, I will give you every particular respecting my journey and reception at the place of my destination: till then,

Dear Frank, farewell!

LETTER XIX.

L—— Parsonage.

My Dear Frank,

Not being able to quit L—— so soon as I expected, and having lately been to view the imposing monument of Saxon antiquity called Corfe Castle, in the Isle of Purbeck, I will now attempt to give you some account of that ancient fortification of Wessex; one of the most impregnable in the kingdom before the discovery of gunpowder, and once the seat of royalty, the habitation of princes; but now the abode of solitude and desolation, the melancholy dwelling of the owl and the raven.

The majestic ruins crown the summit of a conical and rocky hill, which rises almost perpendicularly on every side, except to the south; where the ramparts descend to its base, and where the principal entrance, between two circular towers once covered with handsome domes, stands in noble but dilapidated grandeur. This castle was raised as a strong barrier in the only opening of that lofty range of mountains, which,

like an immense intrenchment, seem thrown up by nature to protect the southern and most fertile part of the Isle of Purbeck from the sudden invasion of a foe, and the chilling blasts of the stormy north. Even now, when far remote from the scene, in fancy's eye, as the darkly rugged remains of its topmost tower, rent in twain, rise over the dim mists of the evening heath, the lofty and stupendous ruins seem two mighty giants that still stand to guard the entrance to some fairy land of beauty and delight. By whom this vast castle or palace of many towers was originally built, is buried in eternal oblivion. It was, no doubt, once the residence of the West Saxon Kings. Aubrey, in his *Monumenta Britannica*, says he was informed that mention was made of Corfe Castle in the reign of King Alfred; and that Dr. Thomas Gale said it was built by King Edgar, who sent for workmen out of Italy. But not anything, with certainty, can be maintained respecting its founder.

You enter the outer gate over a noble bridge of four lofty but narrow arches into the first ward, in which are eight towers: two of them, on the south-west side, upheaved from their foundations, lean several feet from their perpendicular, and seem ready with every blast to tumble into

the deep glen below, where lie immense and rock-like fragments torn from the shattered walls. In this ward, which is neither so strong nor appears so ancient as other parts of the castle, wrought the smiths, the artificers, and the armourers. Here were forged the glittering panoply, the golden shield, and the blazing falchion for the proud knight, ere through yonder portal, betwixt the bowing warders, he rode forth on his prancing war-horse, to exhibit his prowess in the splendid tournament, or combat amid the sword-thinned ranks of battle. And here have kings and princes, dukes and eorls of regal blood, and noble castellains, created lord-lieutenants and admirals of the island, unfurled their gilded standards, assembled their armed bands, and marshalled their retainers for war. How still, how silent now! The banners of England no longer float on the rugged battlements of yonder deserted tower: no longer ring these hoary walls with the din of

> "Armourers accomplishing the knights,"

whilst

> "Busy hammers, closing rivets up,
> Give dreadful note of preparation."

The tramp and neigh of the war-horse caparisoned for the field, is heard no more within this quiet court; nor is its area filled with gleaming files of fighting men. The silver voice of the trumpet no longer awakens the echoes of those neighbouring mountains; nor fills the soul of the fearful with dismay, nor the bosom of the valiant with gladness. Cattle now feed where captains and princes once trod in graceful pride. The ash blossoms on the nodding wall: and ravens dwell in the warder's ruined chambers.

But pass we over another bridge that crosses an interior moat, and enter by a ruined archway guarded, like the outer gate, with two strong round towers, the second ward. The west, or left tower, with part of the arch, having been undermined for the purpose of demolition, and the props giving way before it could be accomplished, sunk nearly half its altitude into the trench; yet, notwithstanding its prodigious weight, astonishing as it may appear, this vast piece of building has settled perpendicularly, though projecting four feet nine inches beyond the other part of the gate. Just within this severed portal are the traces of a once lofty and noble flight of stairs, that led directly up to the chambers of the great royal tower. It was on this fatal spot

where the youthful, the amiable, the martyred King Edward was stabbed. On those marble stairs, now disjointed, broken, and overgrown with grass and weeds, was heard the sound of Elfrida's footsteps as, with smiles on her beautiful countenance and daggers in her heart, she descended from her tapestried halls to welcome her innocent victim, returning weary and thirsty from the chase in the forest of Purbeck. Behind her came the hired assassin, with his poniard concealed in his vest, and a train of her chosen slaves. The very ground on which I now stand, drank the regal martyr's blood as he lifted the wine-cup to his lips, that breathed a health to his murderess ere he tasted the fatal draught. From this spot the ambitious queen exulting saw thy gallant courser, O ill-fated prince! with his flanks bathed in thy blood, fleet like lightning through that portal arch: then, mounting the battlements of her topmost turret, beheld him with his fainting lord scour across the adjacent heath, and gloried in the success of her meditated revenge!

We now advance to the remains of the prison-chapel and dungeon-tower, that stood on the most western part of the hill within this ward; the latter a place of confinement for captives

taken in war, and for those who had committed offences within the jurisdiction of the castellain or lord-lieutenant of the island. This seems to be by far the most ancient part of the immense fortress, and partakes of the Roman manner of building. The courses of the stones being laid obliquely, show it to have been erected in the early times of the Saxons. Near the dungeon-tower is a large stone projecting from the wall, in which a deep line is cut,—said to be the stone of execution. Who can view this spot without reflecting on the horrible miseries that man, more cruel than demons, has wantonly inflicted on man! In the dungeons beneath, what sighs have been breathed, what tears shed by the hapless, hopeless captive! How have these walls echoed to the groans of anguish and the wailings of despair! How oft has innocent blood encrimsoned this horrid place! What noble firmness, what undaunted heroism, worthy to be recorded to all generations, have been here displayed! How many victims of lawless tyranny, led from the caverns of eternal gloom in the bosom of the hill, have knelt in that prison-chapel before the altar of Christ, to prepare for their speedy passage to another and a better world! From those narrow windows they viewed for the last time yon wes-

tern hill, the waving forest whose leaves danced glittering in the sunbeam, the fields beneath clad in flowers, and the skies above hung with the purple clouds of morn; and though with thoughts bent heavenward, the fond idea of dear-loved absent friends, perhaps unconscious of their doom, haunted still their agonized souls, till the scalding tear-drops bedewed the shrine of God! But their moments are few, and the executioner of tyranny waits to take their lives: they rise from their knees, and march with firm steps to the gore-died place of slaughter: they bow their necks, and their spouting blood besprinkles the walls of the dungeon!

After the battle of Mirabel, in which Prince Arthur was defeated by his uncle, two and twenty of the brave nobles of Anjou and Pictavorum * were, at the command of the cruel usurper John, imprisoned in these dungeons, where they horribly perished by famishment! I see the pale emaciated victims of ambition and cruelty chained to the massy walls: deep, eternal night rests on their living tomb, unbroken by a single ray: their prison-doors are fastened on them for ever; and nor sound of voice or footstep of the stern jailor, shall ever fall again on their eagerly lis-

* Poictiers, according to Antonine.

tening ears! The pangs of hunger prey on their vitals: they shriek with fierce agony, they yell in frightful despair! They faint, yet recover to still keener anguish: famine gnaws their bowels: their hearts burn with unquenchable thirst. In wild fury they break their chains, and fasten on each other like furious wolves: frenzy takes possession of their souls, and each quaffs his fellow captive's blood! But let me hasten from the revolting scene: horrors I cannot endure to contemplate.

The third and grand ward is situated on the summit of the hill. Here stood a vast square building, called the king's tower, which was eighty feet in height and its walls twelve feet in thickness, commanding the rest of the castle, the town below, and all the neighbouring country,—except that lofty range of hills which rise on the east and west, far above its topmost battlements. Here, no doubt, was the state-prison; for the windows that remain in some of its apartments are placed at a great height above the floor, to prevent the solitary captive's escape. In this ward stood also the queen's tower, the kitchen, and according to some St. Mary's chapel: but from the remaining ruins, it is more than pro-

bable that St. Mary's chapel was in the fourth and last ward, where were likewise a small garden and a sally-port, through which the parliament forces entered by treachery when the castle was taken from the royalists, and by them completely destroyed. Here as you wander among the vast fragments of ramparts, walls, and towers, that nearly cover the whole area, hanging over and piled on each other in wild confusion, thrid its dreary and naked passages, through which the hollow winds rush with doleful voice, behold its arched galleries that led in other days to magnificent rooms of state, its broken pillars, its dilapidated sculpture, and gaze with upturned eye on the yet remaining parts of this once noble palace, that still in rugged grandeur lift their brows crowned with a simple diadem of wild flowers amid the clouds, what a train of melancholy ideas crowd upon the mind! There *was* a time when these walls, that now in rude nakedness confront the pelting of angry tempests, were hung with the variegated web of gleaming gold and flowers. Where now the waving grass and rustling ivy luxuriantly flourish, the storied tapestry of arras once resplendently shone, in which

"Was inwoven many a gentle tale;
Such as of old the rural poets sung,
Or of Arcadian or Sicilian vale:
Reclining lovers in the lonely dale,
Poured forth at large the sweetly-tortured heart;
Or, sighing tender passion, swelled the gale,
And taught charmed echo to resound their smart;
While flocks, woods, streams around, repose and peace
impart:"

or the dreadful deeds of raging warriors, amid the din and confusion of battle, appeared in all their horrors; while the fierce chief

"Through the middle of the fight,
Exulting lashes on his fiery steeds,
Smoking with sweat; and, dreadful to behold,
Tramples his prostrate foes: the rapid hoofs
Scatter the gory dew, all sprinkled round,
And spurn thick clots of mingled sand and blood."

In those chambers all is desolation and silence, save when

"From yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain,
Of such as wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign:"

or the midnight tempest rushes through them in

all its ruthless fury, and the deep voice of the cloud-born thunder is heard amid their gloomy solitude. Yet there have rung the shouts of revelry, and the loud voice of mirth; the vastel-bowl * has been lifted on high at the sumptuous banquet; and the lute and the harp breathed their softest, sweetest tones of witchery, as they passed round among the joyous emptiers of the wine-cup,† or were struck by the honoured scald of the feast, while royalty from its canopied chair of state listened delighted to the minstrel tales of love and chivalry.

In that roofless tower, so rugged and bare, once shone the imperial diadem and regal staff of St. Edward; the golden spurs, the sceptre of the cross, the orb or globe, an ensign emblematical of supreme power, that used to be borne on a spear before the chief king of the Saxon Octarchy; the sceptre of the dove, the ampulla, containing the sacred oil of regal consecration, jewels and splendid robes of state, with all the ancient regalia of the monarchs of England. They were laid up within these walls, as in a place of the greatest

* The health-bowl of the Saxons at their entertainments.

† Bede tells us, that "in a festive company the harp was sent round, that those who could might sing."—*Lib. iv. c.* 24.

security, by King John, who from this venerable palace promulgated ordinances and decrees throughout his dominions. But ah! what sorrows have the high-born and the mighty endured within this abode of tyranny and power! Oft in that chapel, at the shrine of the Virgin, have knelt Maud de Waleric and her little William, wife and son of William de Braose; who, opposing King John, was compelled to fly into France. Poor captive! thy fervent prayers for deliverance were vain; and vain the tears thou daily sheddest on the head of thy dear loved son. In vain from thy turret window dost thou gaze o'er the wide-extended prospect of heath and river, mountain, sea, and field. The bark spreads its sails, and glides onward to Thornsœta's port; but thy husband comes not to release thee from captivity. He wanders an exile in a foreign land, and thou shalt behold his face no more! The wind sweetly fans thy pale cheek, prisoner of wo, as thou standest by thy narrow lattice, envying the wild freedom of the swallow as he glides fleetly through the arch of St. Edward's bridge, and the careless happiness of the thrush as he warbles his evening song on the ash that leans over the primrose banks of the Corph. Innocent and hapless lady,

98033

sorrow drank thy blood: with thy son in thy arms, thou sunkest on thy pillow and expired! The youth mourned not o'er thee long; he bowed his head on thy tomb; and, like thee, escaped from his prison to the freedom of the blest!

Edward II. caused this castle to be repaired, which had suffered considerable dilapidations, and thus lucklessly prepared a gloomy prison for himself. Muffled in his mantle, at the dead hour of midnight, surrounded by rude guards and his unfeeling keepers,* another ill-fated Edward arrived at those gates, weary and sad, a prisoner in his own kingdom. The storms of night beat heavy on him, as he was hurried by the stern knights through unfrequented paths across the country, to the prison-halls of Corfe. The tramp of horses was heard at those gates, and the rough voices of horsemen claiming entrance of the half-awakened warders. The governor demanded who was there, and was shown the commission of the jailor-knights, which empowered them to enter with their royal charge any fortress in the kingdom, and to command in it during their pleasure. The iron portcullis was then drawn slowly up: the night-raven shrieked dismally from the por-

* Sir John Matravers and Sir John Gourney.

tal-tower. The troop of horsemen rode over the sounding bridge; their robes fluttered in the blast; their ruffled plumes waved loftily on the dusky air, and mournfully whistled the winds round the battlements of the outer towers. They entered the court-yard, and as the torches cast a red glare on the warlike figures dismounting from their steeds, the vizor of Edward fell off, and discovered a face pale with many sorrows. He sighed deeply as the heavy portcullis closed him in, and lifting his eyes to yon dark towers that dimly crown the hill, whose battlements were hid in the bosom of night, a tear of bitter anguish glistened in his fine dark eye. Moving lights were seen to glance from the lofty windows of the royal tower, and the second ward threw its iron portals open to receive him. He entered; but when he had reached the marble stairs yet stained with the blood of his martyred predecessor, a dismal shriek sounded in his ears; the gory form of St. Edward glided by him, and with a hollow voice bade him prepare to meet him in the grave! He trembled with agony of fear, and was supported onward to the lofty hall of kings. Unhappy Edward! my heart bleeds to think what misery in that gloomy hour was thine! No

kingly honours awaited thee in those cold and cheerless chambers! For thee the regal banquet was not spread, nor courtiers served on bended knee: nor minstrelsey, nor masque, nor dance, nor song hailed thy arrival. The regal halls of thy forefathers, wont to ring with mirth and feasting, were silent and sad. The tomb gave up its worshipped dead to meet thee at thy coming, and the shrieks of murdered princes were thy dismal welcome! Poor hapless captive! deprived of thy crown and state, thy wife—who should have shared all thy sorrows, partaken of thy captivity, and soothed with her tenderest love thy prison-hours,—was become thy deadliest foe, and leagued with murderous rebels to take thy life! Thine only son was torn from thee; and thy dear-loved friends had all fallen beneath the bloody axe of lawless power! O, could any sorrow be equal to thy sorrow!

But before we close the scene, and depart from this place of tears and suffering, a tribute should be paid to female nobleness and true heroism. Woman! wondrous creature! thou canst soothe the saddest, charm the happiest hours of man, and throw unspeakable enchantment o'er both the sunshine and the shade of human life! Thou,

also, in the hour of difficulty and danger canst assume the lion-like port, the energy, and the valour of the rougher sex; canst front the battle's edge with cool intrepidity at honour's call, and glory to die in thy country's cause. And such was Lady Bankes, whose husband in process of time became lord of these towers; which she bravely defended, and with her maidens fought gallantly on the battlements against the rebel forces in 1643.

After possessing the no mean honour of being one of the last places in England that held out for King Charles, it was taken by treachery Feb. 26, 1645; and sad to relate, was soon afterwards reduced to its present melancholy heap of ruins. Thus perished this fine specimen of Saxon architecture: thus fell the royal palace of Corfe!

I am, dear Frank,

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XX.

Bristol.

DEAR FRANK,

I ARRIVED in this city four days ago, and having an hour to spare, sit down to give you some account of my journey hither, and the family in which I am placed. I took coach at Dorchester: the day was uncommonly fine, and after passing over the downs, we had a most extensive prospect from the brow of a steep hill of the paradisiac vale of Blackmoor. It is beyond description luxuriant and beautiful; and could not but bring to my recollection what has been said of that plain in Panchaia, situated in the Arabian gulph, which Diodorus Siculus declares to have rivalled the Elysian fields;—while of its temple, Jupiter himself, to whom it was dedicated, might have been proud. But alas! my friend, how transitory is all sublunary beauty! That delightful plain, or rather island according to Grandpré, has long since disappeared,—"sunk into the abyss made by the fire beneath its foundations."

My fellow travellers in the coach consisted of a young lady, a great admirer of the flimsy Cockney school of poetry; a buckish modern farmer; an old quaker-like looking antiquarian; an officer in the army, who had lately come from the peninsula; and a dissenting Doctor of Divinity, whom I personally knew.

"What a charming *leafy-looking, primrosy* valley this is before us," said the lady.

"Fine country, ma'am," replied the young farmer, "and breeds some of the best cattle in all Dorsetshire."

"'Pon my soul, I see nothing in the prospect to admire. It's well enough, to be sure, for England: but England is a poor barren-looking, uninteresting country altogether, in my opinion. Spain and Portugal are the countries for fine scenery, fine mountains, fine valleys, fine cities, and fine women, by my honour," said the officer, conceitedly pulling up his shirt-collar above his black stock.

"I have no doubt," returned the lady, somewhat piqued, "but the *cedarn* and *orange-ornamented* views in those countries are very fine. I have read *Almada Hill*, written by Mickle, who translated into our language the great epic poet

Camoens, and liked it pretty well. But let me tell you, sir, that I think our own country is not deficient in fine views of leafy luxuriance, and valleys of delicious *greenery*, as Mr. Coleridge beautifully expresses it; or in much of mountain scenery that partakes of the sublime."

"Decidedly not, madam," said the little queer-looking antiquarian; "we may travel as far as we will abroad, but for beauty and luxuriant vegetation we shall find few valleys in the world that surpass those of Gloucester and Berkley, through which the Severn majestically rolls its bright and ample flood. Then for sublimity, what can exceed the dale of Castleton, in Derbyshire? It is, in my opinion, an incomparable scene, displaying as you descend to it from the Winnets an almost inconceivable magnificence. For the beautiful, the terrific, and the sublime strangely mingled, what can equal the vale of Keswick, in Cumberland? What for the horrible, the grand, and the vast, those of Borrow and Gatesgarth, in the same county? whose mountains command prospects the most immense and varied from the German ocean to the Irish sea, including lakes and islands, rivers, friths, and bays, hills and valleys, both in England, Scotland, and the

ancient kingdom of the Isle of Man. Then for the wild, the fantastic, and romantic, what can match with Dovedale, in Derbyshire, or that beautifully winding glen through which the Wye wanders amid hanging woods of richest tints and marble coloured cliffs to join the Severn below the gloomy and ponderous towers of Chepstow Castle? not to mention ——"

"My good sir," said the officer, whose impatience at the antiquary's long descriptive speech was visibly pourtrayed in his countenance, and who did not seem to think it worth his while to apologize for thus abruptly interrupting the old man, "you never saw, I presume, the delightful plains of Valencia, the golden meads through which the Guadalquivir flows, nor the valleys, covered with orange and fig-tree groves, of Mercia, the garden of Spain? What mountains in England can match the Pyrenees, the Sierra de Alcaraz, the Sierra d'las Asturias, from whose top both the bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean sea can plainly be seen? Then for cities, can Oxford with its boasted colleges vie with Salamanca, or the magnificent Seville, of which latter city there is this Spanish proverb—

Chi non ha vista Sevilla
Non ha vista meravilla.

Then for churches and palaces, Spain is not to be equalled by the whole world put together! What cathedral in England can be put in competition with that of Toledo for magnificence and wealth; or that of Seville for amplitude and loftiness; while the royal palaces of Britain are but stables compared to that most splendid edifice of the Escurial, which is called by the Spaniards, and 'pon my honour, I think justly too, the eighth wonder of the world."

"Their palaces and cities," answered the old gentleman, "may in some things surpass ours, I grant; but they have few natural curiosities, and still fewer antiquities,—in which last treasure I glory to say my own country is rich."

"By the honour of a soldier, there are not a few natural curiosities which I have heard boasted of in Spain," said the officer. "In the dukedom of Cerdona is a mountain whose earth is like meal or flour, a fountain with water the colour of red wine, and a salt of various tints, which when reduced to powder becomes perfectly white. They boast also the richest bridge in the world, on which feed above ten thousand sheep, and over which an army might march in full array for battle, —meaning that place where a large river called the Guadiana dives for a long way under ground.

Antiquities they certainly have in different parts of the peninsula; for near the straits are the remains of an ancient temple dedicated to Hercules, in which place the natives declare it was that Julius Cæsar wept for envy when he called to mind the wonderful exploits of Alexander: and I myself have visited the ruins of the famous Numatia, near the springs of the Douro, in which four thousand soldiers withstood forty-thousand Romans fourteen years; and at last, gathering all their money, goods, and armour together, laid them on a pile, which being fired, they all voluntarily burnt themselves in the flames, leaving Scipio, the Roman general, nothing but the name of Numatia to adorn his triumph. In Spain is likewise a city called Girona, a bishop's see, said to have been first built by Gerion 513 years after the flood. Other objects of equal interest to the virtuoso and antiquarian are to be met with in that fine country. At Merida are some of the most noble remains of Roman antiquities any where to be found. There is yet standing, in a state of high preservation, a magnificent bridge of seventy-five arches built by that people. Also a temple of Mars, and a superb Naumachia: several rows of seats, from whence the spectators

beheld the naval feats performed on its mimic sea, are still to be seen surrounding the interior of that dilapidated edifice. But the grand aqueduct surpasses anything of the kind I ever beheld. It is not less than ninety feet in height where it crosses the Albarregas. The astonishment which its vast magnitude creates, is presently lost in surprise at its airy lightness: yet light as its topmost arch-work is, it appears most wonderful how such a mass could be sustained at so great a height. In short, my good sir, I think the peninsula a thousand times more interesting and beautiful, in every point of view, than England."

"You may," replied the old-fashioned gentleman, piqued at the preference and honour given to a foreign land; "but I do not; and will engage to show within twenty miles of each other, and one of them not ten miles from that stone," (pointing to a milestone) "two as noble objects of antiquity as Spain or any other country can boast; and they are the stupendous ruins of the Saxon castle of Corfe, and the amphitheatre built by the Romans at Dorchester."

"What!" exclaimed the young farmer, who till now had remained silent, staring at the

speeches of the officer and the antiquarian, "do you mean that great heap of earth thrown up in a sort of ring, in Dorchester fields, which I have heard some gentlemen say was once a place for games?"

"I do."

"If I could have had my will, I would have levelled it long ago. It's a pity so much good land should be lost, now that corn fetches such a price."

"And pray what price does it fetch just now," said the old man.

"O, wheat is about one and twenty shillings a bushel; but we expect it will be considerably higher before harvest: I intend to ask three and twenty for father's next market-day at Dorchester. Barley I think is at a tolerable price—about three pounds eleven shillings the quarter; and cattle, too, sell pretty well."

"Good God!" said the antiquarian, "how different are times to what they were in the days of our forefathers! Why, according to the Black-book, in Henry the Second's reign a measure of wheat to make bread for a hundred men, cost only twelve-pence; and the carcase of a fat ox the same price. In Henry the Sixth's time, a

certain farmer dwelling at Criuse Roysie, in Hertfordshire, sold twenty quarters of the best wheat for twenty shillings; and when Queen Mary was married to Philip of Spain,* a barrel of beer was sold for sixpence with the cask, and four great loaves of bread for one penny."

"And what says Bishop Latimer," cried I, who had till now been a listener, "in one of his court-sermons in King Edward's time, inveighing against the nobility and gentry, and lauding the moderation of landlords a few years before, he declares that upon a farm of four pounds a year at the utmost, his father tilled as much ground as kept a dozen men; that he had it stocked with a hundred sheep and thirty cows; that he found the king a man and a horse, himself remembering to have buckled on his father's harness; that he gave his daughters five pounds a piece in marriage; that he lived hospitably among his neighbours, and was not backward in his alms to the poor. How different were the agriculturists of those times to the gentlemen tillers of land in the present day."

"Gadzooks!" cried the farmer, "pretty times those must have been for farmers truly! But,

* In St. Mary's chapel, at Winchester.

thank God, we live in better days. Well, I don't wonder the old folks let those barrows and theatres, as you call them, remain on their lands, when they could make so little of them. But now's the time to down with them all, and though I couldn't get leave to level that there place near Dorchester, I would make the carters plough up all the middle of it, close to the bank, and lower some of the outer part by digging down the earth and mixing it with a heap of manure."

"I wish, my dear Frank, you could at this moment have seen the face of the little antiquary. It had something inexpressibly comic in it, though his eyes flashed with anger till they were as red as a ferret's.

"It is a pity" cried he, "that the hands of those who would take from that most venerable, most noble, and highly interesting work of the Romans, the most perfect of the kind remaining in Europe, one spit of earth, were not lopped from their bodies and nailed by the common hangman to the gates of the neighbouring town! What! dilapidate that which has stood so many ages! Defile those walls with dung where emperors, princes, and warriors, the conquerors of the world, have sat to witness the

manly sports and martial exercises of the ancients!"

"For my part," said the farmer, "I'd sooner see a good corn-rick in our barton any day o' the week, than them there old heaps of useless dirt."

"Ignorant and sordid wretch!" half whispered the antiquarian.

"Father and I set our men to work one day, and completely levelled a barrow down in our lower fields, for nobody had a right there to interrupt us."

"A Celtic or a Roman tumulus!" sighed the old man. "And did you find any thing in it to repay you for the expense and trouble?"

"No: nothing but an old pot full of ashes and bones."

"Ah! the ashes of some princely warrior, sacrilegiously disturbed after resting so many ages in peace."

"And what did you do with it?" said the lady to the farmer.

"O, broke it to pieces, to see if we could find any money in it; but there was none, and so we flung ashes, shards, and bones into the ditch."

"Barbarous Goth!" rejoined the old man.

"The bones of a princely hero thrown into a ditch! To what base uses may we not return! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole!"

"Ah," cried the lady, who began to feel interested in the subject, "that reminds me of Shakspeare—

> "Imperial Cæsar dead and turned to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
> O, that the earth which kept the world in awe,
> Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!"

But do you, sir, really think that vessel or urn contained the ashes of some ancient warrior or king?"

"Undoubtedly, madam," replied the antiquary: and here he entered into a long dissertation on the manners and customs of the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain and other ancient nations at the funerals of their deceased chiefs, with a tedious list of authors in support of his assertions, and concluded with saying, "that many in our days" casting a severe and satirical glance at the young farmer, "were even more barbarous and ignorant than the Celtic Islanders of Britain two thousand years ago."

The dissenting doctor, who had seemed till

now wrapped up in cogitabund musings of high import, or lost in wonder at the vast depth of his immeasurable cognoscence, awaking as from a dream, lifted up his eyes and thanked the Lord that those ages of darkness and pagan abominations were passed away, and that he should be glad to see every vestige of such ignorant and superstitious times, which gave him horror to behold, swept from off the face of the earth, being moreover an unsightly hindrance to cultivation and improvement.

"I had myself" said he, "some fields, in one of which was a considerable circle of earth cast up, and which an antiquarian once assured me from the various accounts he had consulted of the manners and ceremonies of the British Druids, was either a council-seat of those ancient islanders, or a small Celtic temple raised for the worship of one of their gods; on which I immediately had it levelled with the soil, and built a cow-house on the spot; that like the good King of Judah, who burnt the dead on the altars of Baal, I might defile the place with the dung of beasts, and at the same time leave not a relic of their bloody superstition, to disgrace the field of a minister of the Lord Jesus."

The poor antiquarian by this time was getting

into a paroxysm of wrath, when the young lady with a deep sentimental sigh asked him if he thought the farmer's casting the ashes of the British hero into a ditch would not be a fine subject for a pathetic poem. This unlooked for question seemed to give a sudden turn to the old gentleman's thoughts, who snappishly replied,

"I don't know, indeed. Poetry is a thing for which I have no taste. I hate it as much as I do modern improvements in agriculture. Poetry is the effervescence, the mere froth, the scum of solid literature; and ought, like fairy stories, to be confined to the nursery. I am astonished that any person of sound sense and extensive learning, should for a moment waste their time on such frivolous pursuits. I never read poetry, except now and then a few lines of Milton's *Paradise Lost.*"

"Paradise Lost!" said the lady, turning up her nose with a sneer, "people make a great fuss about that poem; but for my part, I don't like it at all! It's so abominably long, so dry, so harsh, so confoundedly sermonizing," (here the doctor, with a half-smothered ejaculation, lifted up his eyes and hands to hear such profaneness.)

"I never read it with any kind of pleasure. Besides epic poetry is quite out of fashion in the present day."

"I truly believe it is, madam," said I. "We seem to have no bard in this prolific age of flimsy and ephemeral writing, who dares attempt so lofty a flight."

"O, tedious and absurd," cried the lady; "such endless stories I detest: one might as well hope to labour through a musty folio of divinity, or Bunyan's *Holy War*. I am doatingly fond of *good* poetry, and, must confess, have a very mean opinion of the understanding of those who affect to despise the heavenly art of the Muses. But give me the tender, soul-bewitching simplicity, the softly-creeping-into-one's-heart sentimentality of the new school of poetry. O, it makes music so sweet in my ears!—just like the little clock-work organs they put into snuff-boxes. Let who will toil through all the thundering bombastic jargon and unintelligible sublimity of Milton for me."

"O, my sister," said the farmer, "is the girl for poetry. She is always writing poetry since she came from boarding-school; but for my part, I didn't care much about learning when I was

there, except 'twas to dance; and very well it was that I did like that sport, as it is so highly necessary now in a farmer's edication: for without being able to cut a few genteel capers, we yeoman-cavalry gentlemen should make but plaguy poor figures at the balls we always give at the town-hall, after our grand field days are over."

"Prò sancte Jupiter!" said the antiquary to himself, "who ever heard of a ball given by farmers in good Queen Bess's days."

"Sister Margery," continued this son of the plough, "by the bye, Margery is an ugly name; but father is rather old-fashioned, and he would have her christened by that name, because it was his mother's; but I assure you, Miss, sister is very clever. She is always at her French lessons and at her piano, with which she has instructed the pigs, whenever she plays a certain piece of music by the parlour window, to come squeaking and grunting to their dinners and suppers. Then between whiles she writes poetry, with which she reads father and mother to sleep in the evenings; and a lady, who was lately at our house on a visit, has promised to get some of her poems put into the London Magazine next month. I think

I have a copy of one of them in my pocket. Shall I read them to you, Miss?"

The lady nodded a kind of haughty assent, that indicated she had but a poor opinion of his sister's abilities. I can remember two of the lines which he read with a disagreeable drawling tone, and they were

> "The cows and the butterflies dance on the green,
> Birds dance on the boughs, and the little buttercups
> dance between."

He could proceed but little further, when, unable longer to restrain our risibility, we all joined in a general laugh. This so disconcerted the young farmer, that he hastily put his sister's exquisite production into his pocket, and remained sullenly silent the rest of the journey. I found that we all widely differed in taste, and inwardly despised each other for dissenting so far in opinion. But let me hasten to a close. As the sun "in flaming glory" sunk beneath the western mountains, the distant towers of Bristol with the elegant village of Clifton crowning the summit of the hill that overlooks the city, burst full on our view. The thick smoke ascended on the evening air from the lofty glass-houses, and

the numerous windows on the hill flashed a crimson glare in the last beams of the sinking "orb of day." Yonder, thought I, is the scene of fresh adventures. Prospects new and delightful, the offspring of fancy, rose before me, till my meditations were disturbed by the buzz of the busy multitude, the noise of the wheels and the jolting of the coach in the crowded streets of this metropolis of the west. I must defer my account of the family with whom I am till my next, and conclude with subscribing myself as usual,

Your sincere friend,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXI.

Bristol.

DEAR FRANK,

THE family I am at present placed in consist of Mr. J——, a pale austere sort of man, an attorney of some eminence; his wife,—a short fat dame, equally proud and imperious; a niece,—young, beautiful, and affable; two clerks,—one a young man of pleasant manners new in the profession, the other a pert conceited coxcomb, who being the senior gives himself a great many ridiculous airs: to these must be added three maid-servants and a groom.

I should have written to you before, but the uncertainty of my staying here and want of time must be my excuse. Mr. J—— seldom comes into our office, one of us generally going to his for orders. I have been here something more than eight weeks, and yesterday he called me into the drawing-room and told me I did not suit him, and that I had better think of returning to my friends. I inquired his reasons for disliking me, but could draw from him nothing

further on that subject. He said that he had written to the Rev. Mr. Banister respecting me, and that I might remain in the house a fortnight or three weeks longer, if in that time I thought proper to try for some other situation in the city.

Here is another blow to all my hopes! I have been for eight or nine weeks by every attention and assiduity in my power trying to please and give satisfaction to him, who seems for some unknown reason determined not to be pleased or satisfied. I gave up my favourite studies and pursuits, nor have I written or even read a line of poetry since my arrival in this city:—yet all to no purpose! I cannot bear the thoughts of again returning to L——, and will therefore seek for some other engagement.

Four days ago I began this epistle, and having further matter of much interest to communicate, I can no longer delay throwing myself upon that sympathy I have ever experienced from your unvarying friendship. I received this morning a most kind and consoling letter from my dear friend Mr. Banister. He is highly displeased at Mr. J——'s capricious treatment, and tells me, as some recompense, that till I can obtain another situation, or return again to my relatives, I shall

make his father's house in Broadmead my home, where I have pleasantly passed every Sunday since my coming to Bristol. This is kind, you will say,—indeed I feel it peculiarly so: for my friend's father, ever since my first visit to him, has treated me with all the affection of a parent.

Mr. Banister says in his letter, that Mr. J——l accuses me of neglecting my business in the office to read and write poetry. Now this is a wilful mis-statement, and is either one of his own invention, or of one of the clerks. I shrewdly suspect the little, conceited prig of a senior, whose ignorant vanity and contemptible prule I heartily despise, to be the author of it. But there is another, a secret cause for this dismissal, which I have just discovered through one of the domestics. I am the suspected instrument of the niece's clandestine correspondence with her lover, a young and handsome officer in the army, and on whose account she has been several times confined to her chamber. The poor girl, it seems, has no fortune but her beauty and accomplishments; and her old ambitious aunt is determined to make what she conceives to be a good sale of them, by compelling her to marry a little, fat, old bachelor, a Welch counsellor, whose chief merit lies in his riches. To this accusation, my dear friend, I

freely plead guilty; and let the sordid and unfeeling, who could see a sweet, lovely young orphan left to the cruel protection of one that would sacrifice the most amiable qualities at the shrine of Mammon, without affording her every assistance, condemn me if they will:—their censures I must ever despise.

You know your friend too well, Frank, to be unaware how much I detest the insolence of unfeeling power and despise the paltry pride of mean ambition. Could I then endure for a moment to hear a lovely, interesting female, who had honoured me with her confidence, plead her distress; could I see her shed tears for the absence of a lover, young and amiable as herself; or listen unmoved to her entreaties that I would convey a letter to him secretly?—I need not tell *you* that I could not. I *have* been the bearer of several letters betwixt them, and more than once the means of their obtaining an interview and enjoying all the tender, the delightful sympathy of virtuous though unhappy love:—and had I the same opportunity would do it again, even at the risk of being doomed to return a second time to the dreary obscurity of L——.

I will not tarry here any longer. These clerks

have quite thrown off the mask of friendship, and shine out in their true colours. How have I been gulled to suppose their professions of respect and kindness, as long as they thought their employer shewed me any countenance, were any thing but the common-place complaisance of hypocrisy.—But my light is expiring and I must suspend the labour of my pen till to-morrow.

This morning's post has completed my misery, by bringing me the following letter:

London, October 12.

"SIR,

Yours of the 8th of August I did not receive till a few days ago, owing to my being at the Isle of Wight, Harrowgate, Margate, &c. I am extremely sorry it is totally out of my power to serve you here, as I am myself at a loss for a situation. I have read your Tragedy attentively, and perceive it would be impossible to fit it for stage-representation without such alterations, &c., as would cost me many weeks. You will pardon my observing, there is so much of the descriptive in it,—far too much to remain as a play, though very beautiful in many parts as a poem, and a great deal too improbable for a tragedy, but yet reconcileable as a romance. If you thought I might succeed with the Bristol manager, I would not hesitate to make a purpose journey; and then, perhaps, I might be of service to

you there. Favour me with a line as before, and believe me

Your most respectful Servant,
J. WILLIAMS."

This is indeed to feel disappointment! The family here are apprised of my having sent a Tragedy to Covent-Garden, but they shall not have the mean and cruel gratification of insulting me with its failure, or my want of ability to write for the stage. I shall quit this house to-morrow for ever, and remain at Mr. Banister's in Broadmead a few days; when, if I cannot obtain another situation, I must return a second time to L——.

You have a kind heart,—and what is more, a soul in which all the virtues love to dwell,—formed for the exalted pleasures of sacred friendship, that

"Sweet'ner of life and solder of society.
Oft have I proved the labours of thy love,
And the warm efforts of thy gentle heart
Anxious to please——"

Therefore I well know how much you will regret my cruel destiny, and pity one who sinks

"Oppressed with grief, oppressed with care,
A burthen more than I can bear,

I set me down and sigh;
Oh life, thou art a galling load,
Along a rough and weary road,
To wretches such as I!"

Yet in joy or in sorrow I am still

Yours most truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXII.

Bristol.

DEAR FRANK,

I WILL remain here no longer. Disappointment has followed disappointment in all my attempts, as it did in London, to obtain employment, and to-morrow I shall set off by the Weymouth coach for Dorsetshire. During my stay here, I have visited the elegant village of Clifton, strolled to the Hotwells, wandered on the lofty rocks of St. Vincent, and among their pleasant woods of sycamore, mountain ash, box, and mournful yew, and sat musing in their celebrated cavern so oft the cool and delightful retreat of evening minstrels, whose notes, floating across the water and reverberated from rock to rock, form an assemblage of sounds inexpressibly grand and harmonious.

This cave may be considered as the abode of the giant said to have resided amid these rocky precipices; who, quarrelling with another giant that dwelt at Westbury, severed these rocks asunder for the purpose of taking away his

enemy's river. The design appears to have succeeded, as the remains of the channel of a river are said to be still visible from Westbury to the Severn.* Be the origin of this legend what it may, there is among these woods a strong camp, or hill city, of the ancient Britons.—On one side it is completely defended by the river and inaccessible cliffs; while on the other is a deep valley of considerable extent, whose declivities are very steep. It is only assailable in the front, where are three vast mounds or ramparts thrown up; the inner one, which is the strongest, has been faced with stone, like some of those British cities which King mentions in his *Munimenta Antiqua*. Brandon Hill is asserted by some to

* The following extract lately taken from the papers of the day, is a curious confirmation of some gigantic chief among the aboriginal Britons having once resided in the vicinity of this city:—"A few days since, as some workmen were employed in excavating Knightstone Rock, at Weston Super Mare (an island lately purchased by Mr. Howe, of Bristol, for the construction of hot and cold baths), the skeleton of a man of enormous stature was discovered a few feet below the surface, and near it an antique earthen vessel containing bones of a smaller size: the urn and the skull were unfortunately broken to pieces by the carelessness of the workmen, but many of the bones are preserved in possession of the curious. Conjecture is very busy as to the antiquity of these remains, and the character of the gigantic personage whose frame they once held together; some suppose they belonged to one of those giants, who, old historians assert, peopled this country many ages before the invasion of Cæsar: but as there is an old encampment hard by, which from its construction is probably of British origin, there is little doubt but they are the remains of an aboriginal soldier of distinction. Persons conversant with anatomy infer from the size of the bones, that he must have been nearly nine feet high!"—*Provincial Journal.*

be the production of a volcano, and that on its south side are marks of a lava-stream flowing towards the river. If it be really so, nature at some very remote period must have undergone within the precincts of this great city some strange and dreadful convulsions;—at which time perhaps the rocks of St. Vincent were rent asunder, and the river Avon changed its former course to flow through their narrow chasm.

But in my rambles about Bristol, nothing has attracted my attention so much, or created so great an interest in my bosom, as Radcliff church. The pile itself is grand, and richly ornamented in the florid style of gothic architecture. But there is a charm that dwells amid its fretted aisles and sculptured arches, superior far to all its solemn pomp, its venerable antiquity;—a charm that to the busy and the grovelling, the gay and the ambitious, is more empty than those hollow echoes that haunt its roofs of oak, and die along the shadowy walls when at eventide its sounding doors are harshly closed by the departing verger! It is the name of an ill-fated bard,—poor Chatterton! Among the musty rolls and mouldering records of this noble temple it was, that thou wert supposed to have discovered those legendary lays of thy Saxon minstrels, those

gothic tales of other times, the mighty deeds of the slumberers of the tomb. How do I love to wander amid the dimness of those ponderous colonnades of marble when the pealing organ lifts the anthem of praise to Heaven, and the rattling thunders roll onward, like the roaring of the ocean flood, through all the hollows of the vaulted temple: when the shrill pipes, with sweet and softened diapason, awake the wild spirits of sound, making them dance with airy joy round altar, tomb, and bannered aisle, while the voice of the choristers chant the evening hymn. Then, ill-starred bard, thy pale spectre seems to glide by along the place of tombs, and linger with mournful brow among the monuments of the dead. Then doth it seem as though thy deeply-solemn dirge rang through the mansions of death, and flung its spell-notes of melodious woe o'er the relics of faded greatness, as though a requiem were chanted by angel-voices in the habitation of God to soothe thy departed spirit. Peace to thy shade, sweet minstrel of the west! The tear of pity shall fall on thy osier-bound grave, and the true lover of song pay the tribute of an unfeigned sigh o'er thy mouldering ashes. But who without scorn and detestation can think of the cold-hearted wretch, blest with honours,

power, and wealth, to whom in vain thou toldst thy woes!

"Ah! little think the gay licentious proud
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround;
They who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste;
Ah! little think they while they dance along,

* * * * *

How many pine in want and dungeon glooms,
Shut from the common air and common use,
Of their own limbs; how many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
Of misery, sore pinched by wintry winds:
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty!"

How unpardonably thoughtless, nay how less than human must not Sir Robert Walpole have been, to treat a youth of such surprising and uncommon talents with total neglect: to suffer him, after becoming acquainted by his pathetic application for relief with his unhappy circumstances, dreadfully to perish, and sink untimely to a grave his own hand in the hour of unutterable anguish had too rashly dug!—He, who had some gentle, some godlike arm been kindly stretched forth to relieve and snatch him from the horrid precipice of self-destruction, might have become one of the first of English poets, the boast and glory of his

admiring country! Radiant were thy young beams, O child of the Muses, and glorious thy ascension in the east; hadst thou but gained thy fervid noon, what refulgent splendours would have burst on the world! But the clouds of adversity arose, thy morn of promise, bloom, and beauty was overcast with darkness and thick tempests of despair! Thy sun of early brightness was by the blood-stained and gigantic hand of the fell demon of suicide dashed from its radiant sphere, and hurled down the interminable gulphs of desperation, never again to bless the world with its beams! But what must have been the feelings of him, who turned a deaf ear to the sorrow-fraught tale of a young and hopeless bard? He who might have saved "a prodigy of genius, a literary phenomenon of the times" might, but would not!—who could have restored a once noble and enlightened mind, beclouded with despair, to hope and happiness, but who disdainfully scorned his supplications, and treated him, although he was his superior far in sublime genius, with cruel contempt and neglect! This selfish and ungenerous statesman was thus bitterly characterized by Dean Swift:

"With favour and fortune fastidiously blest,
He's loud in his laugh, and he's coarse in his jest;

Of favour and fortune unmerited, vain;
A sharper in trifles, a dupe in the main;
Achieving of nothing, still promising wonders;
By dint of experience, improving in blunders;
Oppressing true merit, exalting the base,
And selling his country to purchase his place;
A jobber of stocks by retailing false news,
A prater at Court in the style of the stews;
Of virtue and worth by profession a giber,
Of juries and senates the bully and briber:—
Though I name not the wretch, you all know who I mean,
'Tis the cur dog of Britain, and spaniel of Spain."

But with some splendid exceptions, the great, the opulent, and the mighty have seldom any bowels of compassion, any tender sympathy for the truly unfortunate, save when on some public occasion an ostentatious display can be made to the world of their pretended charities. Yet this very man, this Sir Robert Walpole, basking in all the sunshine of court favour, the companion of the learned and the noble, was himself an author, and, like poor Chatterton, had imposed on the public one of his own flimsy productions under the fictitious denomination of a translation from an ancient Italian MS., which he pretended had lain unknown for ages in the archives of some noble family. Alas! it seems to have been peculiarly the fate of true genius to live wretched

and die heart-broken; and when neither hope nor happiness can reach them in the dark cold chambers of the grave, we hear the canting wail of pretended or unavailing compassion uttered over their tombs, and behold useless sums expended to erect pompous monuments to perpetuate the memory of those, whose names, while taste and literature exist on earth, can never die: sums which if real benevolence had stretched forth her hand to them while living, would have fully alleviated their miseries, lighted up in their tear-dimmed eyes the beams of joy, and smoothed with flowers their rugged descent to the dark mansions of the dead. Well may the Rev. Samuel Wesley say, on viewing the monument of the author of *Hudibras* in Westminster Abbey,

"While Butler, needy wretch, was yet alive,
No generous patron would a dinner give:—
See him, when starved to death and turned to dust,
Presented with a monumental bust!
The poet's fate is here in emblem shown,
He asked for bread, and he received a stone!"

You will perhaps say there are but few who have endured such accumulated distress, and died at last in abject want. Alas! my friend, there is a melancholy list on record of those who, though their exalted talents enlightened, improved, and

delighted mankind, have either endured extreme bodily afflictions, or the highest degree of mental sufferings.

Farewell, poor Chatterton! thy warm admirer, who, like thyself, already feels the sting of disappointment rankling at his heart, perhaps shall visit these walls no more! Still do I linger till the faint echo of the organ's latest tone dies into silence: still I seem to see thy pale shadow, fading into air, amid the twilight obscurity of yonder lofty colonnade. Thy woes in this world are past, as the fearful dream of the night, O thou hapless minstrel of the Saxon lyre! The tale of *thy* sorrows is told; mine, alas, is but now begun. Grant me, O thou most High, whatever I am doomed to endure, resignation to thy divine will, and fortitude to bear up against all the evils of this life, till thy own good time shall arrive, when at thy command I may depart and be at peace for ever!

I will conclude my letter with the following Monody, inspired by the sight of this noble church.

ON THE DEATH OF CHATTERTON.

Who on yon pallet lies, o'er which the weeds
Of wretchedness hang sordid? From his eye
So darkly beautiful, to heaven upraised,

Frenzy's fierce lightning o'er his death-pale face
Flashes with fearful brightness, like the glare
That through the tempest smites the surgy swell
And the white cliff reveals! It is the bard,
Ill-fated CHATTERTON, wild in the pangs
Of self-wrought dissolution! O rash youth,
Why didst thou to thy lips with trembling hand,
"The poisoned chalice" lift? The cruel stings
Of an unfeeling world's neglect did goad
Thy maddening spirit on to that dire act!

O, where are now those day-dreams of thy youth,
When with a venturous hand thou from the tomb
Of Saxon scalds didst snatch the harp of yore,
Where it had lain in cold oblivious dust
Ages beneath the spell of silentness,
Companion to the worm, beside the bones
Of warrior minstrels, who the mystic lays
Of Odin woke triumphantly, when fell
The sworded Paladins* of British line
Before the seaxen† of the ocean-kings.
Yes, thou that scaldic harp didst seize, and tune
Its strings to notes of fire. How fair thy morn!
How ardent were thy hopes to run the race,
And reach the goal of glory! Brightly rose
In distant prospect the Parnassian hill,
On which the sun-gilt temple of renown
Uptowered in golden splendour to the skies,

* Knights of the round table. † The ancient Saxon sword.

Unfolding its proud gates to welcome thee
An inmate with its mightest sons of light.
Ah me!—what glowing raptures then were thine!
At morn for thee the heavens were filled with pomp;
When spring awoke the blackbird's love-tuned lay,
And showered the fields with cowslips; when the lark—
Her pinion on the rose-died cloud outspread—
Thy slumbers with her sky-won melodies
Broke most delightfully: and when yclad
In all her splendid pride of sunny beams
And flowery odours the bright summer came,
Thine were the beauties of the fields and woods,
Wandering at close of day the pictured pomp
That flamed o'er all the occident to view,
As 'twixt the mossy forest-bowers it shone
Far richer than the ancient sainted dies
That gem cathedral aisles.—Then did thine ear
Drink in the twilight harmonies of earth,
And sea, and air; and when the star-crowned queen,
Fair Dian, through the cloudy infinite
Unweariedly her pilgrimage pursued,
Thou listenedst from some mountain's breezy side
To the moon-lighted songs of nightingales
Hid in the embowering woodshaw. When the groves
Shed to the fitful blast their yellow leaves,
And the confiding redbreast by thee sung
Her sweetly plaintive ditty, thou wouldst climb
The rock's steep brow to catch the sullen roar
Of the broad river, where it wrathful poured

Its foam-spread cataract to departing day,
And fancy in the sound of flood and gale
Thou heardst th' aerial harps of cloud-wrapt bards,
From where beneath their mountain tombs repose
The Briton and fierce Saxon.—And when, clad
In tempest and black mist, chill winter came
Dark lowering o'er the landscape ; when at eve
The thunder from its secret place walked forth,
Filling the firmament with its dread voice,
And azure lightnings through the tenfold gloom
Shone like the fierce death-angel's wing that laid
Sad Egypt's first-born low, thou like the bards,
The prophet bards of old upturnedst thine eyes,
And fancied visions of bright thronging pomps
And creatures of immortal light and life
Upon the midnight flame-cloud ; while thine ears
Were with the deep-toned melodies of heaven
Enrapt to adoration ! Nature's charms
And attributes all, all gave to thy muse
Rapture divine, enthusiastic bliss,
And heaven-like inspiration wildly grand ;
Till thy young spirit, like the radiant moon,
From the sun-fountain of eternal wisdom
Drew plenteous streams of light, and o'er the world
Shed sweet illumination.—Yet earth, vile earth,
O'er whose dull darkness thy soft lustre shone,
Making her howling wilderness a land
Of pleasant shadows, suffered the grim fiend
Adversity its horrid shade to cast

O'er all thy rising splendours, and outpour
On thee the vial of its bitterest wrath,
Turning thy beams to night!—And art thou set
Long ere thy noon, thou brightest star that ere
Rose beauteous in the east?—O, hadst thou reached
The occident, what rich transcendent pomp
Had waited on thy setting; and the world
Had worshipped thy departure, proud to wear
The mantle of thy glory!

Hapless bard!
Earth was not worthy of thee: but thou spurnedst
Its vileness off too rashly. Fatal cup!
Which thou, wo-wearied, to the very lees
Hast in thy madness drained! O, who can paint
Thy dreadful feelings?—youthful hopes destroyed;
The flowers of promise blasted in the bud;
Thy horrible despair; thy awful fears
For the rash deed that sends thy trembling soul
Uncalled into the presence of thy God;
While earth, where all is darkness, pain, and wo,
Fast and for ever from thy view recedes,
And an Eternity, unknown, untried,
In dim but terrible uncertainty
Is dawning on thy view! What heart of rock
Would not e'en bleed to witness thy last pangs,
To hear thy parting groan!

The struggle's past!
The world no more can sting thee.—May thy soul

Amid the Elysian bowers of blissful light
Find that sweet peace which was denied thee here!
Thy scaldic lyre must now, O ill-starred bard,
Be dumb for ever! Like that sainted harp*
Which hung in Avalonia's island cells,
Its strings, untouched by mortal hand, rung forth
A wailing dirge, a requiem sweetly sad,
For him who struck with master-hand its chords.—
The wildly-plaintive knell-notes quickly ceased,
And never shall its golden wires again
Be heard by mortal ears! Sleep with the bard
The eternal slumbers of the dark cold tomb:
The tale of chivalry, and ancient song
Of triumph o'er the battle-riven foe,
Thou shalt awake no more!
Ye Saxon maids,
Profusely gather all the fragrant pride
Of garden, forest, field, and bloomy bower,
And fill with flowers his grave. The tearful spring
Her amethystine violet-wreath and crown
Of daffodils shall scatter o'er his tomb,
And summer shed her brightest roses there;
O'er him shall weep the twilight, and her strains,
Her saddest strains, the pitying eve-bird pour
Lamentably sweet; while pale-eyed morn
His sepulchre with gem-dews shall enshrine.
The true-born minstrel from remotest lands

* The harp of St. Dunstan.

A pilgrim thither will resort, and bathe
The hallowed spot with tears; and there at eve
Shall on the sobbing winds be often heard
The soft, sad dirge-notes of his wandering harp!

I remain, dear Frank,

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXIII.

DEAR FRANK,

SINCE my return to L——, there has been a company of itinerant players at the neighbouring town of W——, although of very indifferent abilities. Yesterday I witnessed a scene, the description of which will, I think, afford you some entertainment.

I chanced in my afternoon's ramble to call in at Farmer H——'s, about three miles from L——, a plain, honest, but wealthy farmer of the old school;—a great rarity, by the bye, in our days; for that truly respectable character, a hearty old English farmer, is but here and there to be found in some remote and obscure corner of the kingdom, and in a few years will be totally lost to the country. His daughter Miss H——, whom her mother, lately dead, was resolved should be sent to a boarding-school, is a compound of ignorance, vanity, and pride, and was strumming away on a new grand piano. She ceased on my entrance, and with a stiff, affected curtsy desired me to be seated; I complied, and in return begged I might

not interrupt her amusement at the instrument; on which, with a smile of self-approbation, she instantly resumed her music-stool, and began murdering a most charming piece of Giovanni Paisiello's. Before she had finished, the farmer came into the parlour; and after giving me a hearty shake by the hand, and a friendly salutation, thus began with his daughter:—

"Odd rot it, Suke! here's the wold work going on:—always a humstrumming on thik there spindiddle thing. Buzz, buzz, like a bee in a tar-barrel, till I am stunned wi' the noise! Why dost'n feed the poultry and the pigs, churn the cream, milk the cows and make the butter, and wear a cap on thy head as thy mother always used to do; not zit drest up here all the day, like one o' the player-volk upon the stage. There never was such doings, sir," (addressing himself to me), "in my young days: then farmers' daughters minded their business, and never had any ridiculous larning, but always took care o' the main chance."

"What a vulgar plebeian, as my governess used to say, you are, papa. I am quite ashamed of your ignorance, I protest. Didn't my mother prevail on you to send me and brother Bob to the boarding-school to have a purlite edication:—

and hav'nt a learned writing and 'diting, flowering and marking, 'rithmetic, history, geography, music, and dancing, and even French too!" Here some wofully mispronounced French words contradicted an insinuation that she understood that language as well as her mother-tongue, and she concluded with—"Ah, papa, you have no knowledge of true merit."

"Don't splutter thy outlandish lingo to me;—I hate to hear it. And hav'nt I tould thee a hundred times to call me vather,—I can't abide to be pa-paed. O, sir," (turning to me), "what an alteration ha' this maid and her brother Robin made in my house within these two or three years! I declare to you I hardly know the place. Till very lately there wasn't such a thing as a looking-glass below stairs, nor yet but one little one above; now here are glasses in every room, in which I can zee myself from top to bottom! My ould easy wooden arm-chair, which once was my grandfather's, in which I used to take a nap on Sunday afternoons, is burnt; and when I begin to nod a little, and wish for my ould comfort, I am tuold by my daughter to throw myself upon a vine covered thing like a bed, which she calls a sophy; yet am never suffered to fall comfortably asleep, for fear I should be so unmannerly as to snore.

Formerly there wasn't a picter in the house but *Death and the Fine Lady, Robin Hood and Little John, The Children in the Wood,* and a few ballads, till Suke and her brother went to a gentleman's sale in the neighbourhood, and bought such great vine picters as frightened I to look at 'em; and for months a'ter, there was nothing talked of in our house by those two but about originals and auver-sea painters, with their outlandish, crackjaw names, as drove me mad to hear 'em. Then the great oak table, that my wife used to keep as shining as a looking-glass, is turned out into kitchen, and a vine humstrum wire-box put in its place, that cost the Lord knows what! But I'd zooner hear the chime o' the bells on the necks o' the horses, as they come into barton from market, any time. Ah, it's no wonder my rents ha' been raised zoo much lately! What with thy brother Robin's riding a hunting with a horse fit for a nobleman, his shining boots, long spurs, all this vinery in the house, and thy flaunting about in thy Sunday's clothes like any lady o' the land, I shall certainly be ruined in my old age."

"Well, papa," said Miss H. with a haughty toss of the head, "all respectable farmers' daughters dress like ladies nowadays; and I have been told by those who know the world, that my edi-

cation has made me a fit match for any gentleman, though you always try to lessen me before people."

"'Tis my belief," replied the father, "that thou art zoo ver out o' the right track, as to be a fit match for nobody. Didn't I bring young farmer Watkins to zee thee only last week?

"Yes," cried Miss, "and as ill luck would have it, you must bring him at the very time my brother and I had an elegant party to spend the evening. You lugged him into the parlour,—the great stupid-looking calf! I blushed;—he stood gaping at the company with a broad, red face, as fat and as round as a Cheshire cheese, his mouth half open and as mute as an oyster, till you pushed him into a chair, when he roared out—'Dang my buttons, varmer, if ever I zeed your daughter look so pretty before in all my life! She's quite the cream o' purliteness, and the darnel-flower o' beauty!' The company all laughed, and I was ready to faint, as you may well suppose, sir. However, recovering myself a little, I handed him a plate of elegantly cut bread-and-butter:—would you believe it, the oaf took its whole contents in his clumsy paws, and pressing the thin slices together, fell devouring away as though he hadn't broke his fast for a week!

But the worst was not past.—Rising in a hurry to take the cup of tea I was about to give him, the vulgar brute completely overturned the tea-equipage, spilt the scalding hot liquor and rich cream into the ladies' laps, and smashed my superb service of china, that cost me no less than ten guineas, into a thousand anatomies. O, let me never see his horrid face here again!—the very thought of him throws me into the historics!"

Here the old man was about to reply, when one of the actors from W—— entered, and bowing very low to Miss H., he presented her with a playbill, hoping she would honour the theatre with her presence, accompanied by a good party, as the morrow evening was his benefit-night.

"Dear, bless me," cried the young lady, "I can't tell what to say about it. Brother's not returned from Poole Market, and I know that he intends to bespeak a play for one of the benefits next week. We intend to order the tragedy of *Nebuchadnezzar the Great;* and I should like some of the principal scenes from Shakspeare's *Hamblet* for an interlusion between the play and entertainment, which brother says shall be the laughable farce of *Breaking the Wind.* It's a thing I never saw, but brother says it is very funny."

The player, no longer able to command his risibility, was convulsed with smothered laughter. With a lengthened apology, he informed her that it was *Alexander the Great* which she meant.

"Yes, yes, Mr. What-is-it, I mean Alexander the Emperor of the Romans; the same, I believe, who first discovered America."

Here the actor, though accustomed to the assumption of various characters, found it impossible to assume any thing like seriousness on the present occasion, and unwilling to offend the lady by exposing her ignorance a second time, abruptly took his leave.

"Do you think, sir," said Miss Sukey, as the player left the room, "that you shall go to the theatre this evening."

I replied I should not; for it appeared to me extremely ridiculous for a small itinerant company to attempt performing such a piece as *Pizarro*, without proper scenery, machinery, dresses, or even the convenience of stage-room; and that it was absolutely turning a splendid play into burlesque and mummery.

"*Pizarro* for this evening is it?" said Miss H——, taking up one of the bills which the player had left on the table: "and who is to play the part of Rolla? Why Mr. Frimble, I

declare! Because he is the manager, he will perform all the best characters."

"For which," replied I, "he is comparatively no more adapted in figure, face, deportment, or utterance than Joe, your principal carter."

"Mr. Gondlemondle ought, I think," said she, "to have played Rolla. He is an elegant young man," (here she fetched a deep sigh) "a very graceful speaker, and quite the gentleman." It was subsequently whispered among the tea-table scandal of this neighbourhood, that the lady had a violent *penchant* for this favourite actor.

The old farmer's patience now began to be exhausted, and he exclaimed "Gadzooks! I wish thee wouldst play thy part in the dairy, and help Bet to make the butter."

"I make butter indeed! no, no, my brother intends having a party and a private consort to-morrow evening, and I must practize on the instrument, and make my arrangements accordingly."

"Party!" cried the enraged father; "the devil take thy parties, I zay! There is no end to 'em wi' thee and thy brother."

"Certainly not: elegant folks can't possibly exist without them. I wish brother Bob was returned:—I want him to send and bespeak the

front boxes, as I think we must patronise this poor man's benefit. But I desire, father, that you don't go there to night; for you make such barbarian remarks, that the people laugh more at what you say than they do at the players."

"I wonder at that; for I am zure they be very vunny zort of volks. I zeed an ould woman, the manager's mother, on the stage the other night—in a tragedy, I think they called it,—wi' scarce a tooth in her head, bellowing and whining about a young fellow that she called her lover, and who was going to be married to another. Then there was a little hop-my-thumb boy that they call a Roscass—"

"A Roscius, you mean," said the daughter.

"Ah, well, a Roscius—drest up like a little king; who ater talking a mort o' outlandish lingo, comed in and stabbed the ould woman's sweetheart. My buttons, what a passion that put her into! She swore she'd go into tother country a'ter un, and in she poked a thing like a pig-killing knife into her side, and lay kicking and sprawling on the ground till I was ready to die wi' laughing."

"Yes, I remember," said Susan, "how I was shocked at your insensibility. I am sure we ladies were all in tears at her distress."

By this time the son's voice began to be heard without, speaking to one of the carters. "Take my mare, Jack, and put on her body-clothes. Split me! but the young squire and I have smoked along."

"Well, brother," said Susan, going to the door, "you are returned from market."

"Yes, sister, and devilishly fatigued, I assure you. These millers and bakers are such ignorant, low fellows! O, what a bore to stand talking to them half the morning! I think I shall make William my steward, and let him bargain with the stupid wretches."

"You have staid rather late."

"Came off, 'pon honour, as soon as ever I had swallowed my third bottle of Madeira."

"How are times altered from what they were when I was a boy," said the old man. "Then the varmers rode to market wi' their dames behind 'em, carried a crust o' bread and cheese in their pockets for dinner, and were content wi' a pint or two o' ale:—never tasted a drop o' wine but once a year, when they paid their rent. Now they drive away in their chaises and whirligigs; toss two or three bottles o' wine down their extravagant throats a'ter a dinner fit for a squire; strut about the market like lords; stuff up their

houses wi' all sorts of vinery; and even ring for their zarvants to wait upon 'em. The world is surely turned topsy-turvy! There is a figure for a varmer! Why thee dost look, Bob——"

"The complete gentleman of wit, elegance, and taste," hastily returned the coxcombical spark, whirling round his fashionable hat on the handle of a very handsome horsewhip, "the idol of the ladies and the envy of the men.—Ah, sir! beg pardon, didn't see you before, 'pon my honour. Hope you are very well. Father and I are always sparring. He is really so far out of the present taste, that we can never agree, for he talks, dresses, and looks so old-fashioned."

"Ould fashioned!" repeated the father testily, "I am a right, stanch, English varmer, who zometimes helps to plough my own fields, and reap my own corn; loves to joke wi' my honest labourers, and cheer their hearts now and then wi' a flagon o' nappy brown ale, and wouldn't pinch the poor widow and the friendless orphan to get a lordship by it! Which of us, dost think, looks the best now? Thee strutting about in all thy vinery, like a Lunnun macaroni, wi' thy routs and thy balls, thy plays and thy parties, pinching the measure and starving the poor; or thy plain, ould, homely father, in his leathern-

breeches and patched jacket, who meets the widow's blessing at every turn, and hears all the little curly-headed brats in the parish call him vather?"

"Their mothers, I'm sure, are very much obliged to you," said the son, bursting into a loud laugh at what he conceived to be the very acme of wit; when Miss Susan, drawing herself up with an air of affected importance, cried

"No more of this dull stuff: papa is always dinging it into one's ears. But, brother, as *Pixerro* is going to be performed this evening for Mr. What-ye-call-em's benefit, I wish you would send to the manager and bespeak the front seat in the boxes. The man has been here to solicit our patronage, and I think we must go and take a few friends."

"Boxes! sister, you forget yourself; there are none in that paltry barn of a theatre."

"True, Bob; well, the first seat in the pit, then. 'Tis well there is some little distinction made, or I'm sure I should faint to be hustled about and pressed on by the rabble-rout."

"I declare, I dont know what some people are made of," returned the brother, "would you believe it, Mr. What-is-it," addressing himself to me, "I looked up into the gallery the last play-

night between the acts, and, split me, if I didn't see farmer C——'s wife and her two daughters squeezed in between a horse-farrier and the great, fat, platter-faced, wheezen-bellied landlord of the *Dog and Duck*."

"O the vulgar creaters!" cried Miss, "they have no more taste than a cheese vat."

"They certainly are a disgrace," said Bob, "to the name of farmer. Folks really do say that Mrs. C. and her two dowdyfied daughters were actually seen last week milking the cows in their barton! Besides it is notorious that Mrs. C. rides behind her husband when she goes to market, and carries the butter-baskets in her lap!" (here the brother and sister laughed inordinately, with whom, however, I felt no inclination to join,) "And what's more,—she keeps but one table for herself and servants, and always stuffs out her great satchel pockets—"

"Pockets!" cried the sister, "what does she wear pockets?"

"Yes,—and crams them with bread and cheese, till she looks like a butcher's horse with panniers, to give her work-folks when she goes into the fields."

"Ha! you are a hopeful pair," said the old farmer, "these times, take my word vor it, will

not last vor ever. And when a turn comes where will ye all be then? But I must round the varm; and mind this, both of ye—nobody need be ashamed o' their calling, zoo it be honest; and 'tis the bounden duty of every man, according to his station in life, to do all the good he can to those about un. He should be like a fruitful April shower, that makes the spring-corn shoot up to reward the labour of the sower, and covers the fields with a beautiful garment of flowers."

The farmer now left the room, and having some business to impart to him alone, I quitted it also. Resigning without regret the company of those who remained, I took a walk round the farm with the worthy old man, whose character I greatly revere. But this scene, which I have penned as accurately as my memory permits, has prolonged my letter to so unusual a length that I must conclude at once, always remaining

My dear Friend,

Yours most truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXIV.

L—— Parsonage.

DEAR FRANK,

WITH this letter you will receive a copy of my poem on Bonaparte's threatened Invasion, which I know will give you much pleasure. I cannot express the delight I experienced, when the parcel containing the copies for this neighbourhood arrived from London at our house. What a triumph for me over the sneers of those, who treated the unaided and simple attempts of boyhood with derision and neglect. The Rev. Mr. Banister, on my return from Bristol, became more than ever my friend! and he declared, on seeing the enclosed poem in MS., that if I would undertake to obtain a sufficient number of subscribers to defray the expenses of publication, he would take it with him to town, get it printed, and influence a very wide circle of friends to take copies. You may be assured I was most happy to embrace such a proposition, and succeeded beyond my expectations.

Many will not believe, now they have seen

the whole poem, that it is the sole production of your friend; but say that Mr. Banister is the principal author. Such a pitiful attempt at detraction I laugh at, as it only heightens my triumph. Dr. Johnson says, the enemies of Denham did the same by him, spreading a report that the poem of *Cooper's Hill* was not his own; "but that he had bought it of a vicar for forty pounds. The same attempt was made to rob Addison of his *Cato*, and Pope of his *Essay on Criticism*." If such things, then, have been said of those who moved in the first ranks of literature, need I wonder at the snarlings of low-minded prejudice in my humble and sequestered walks of life?

As the wave-drenched sea-boy, who has toiled through a night of darkness and storms against the mountainous billows, beholds the first rosy gleam of morning break on the waters, charming with her smile the tempest into peace, so the youthful bard, surmounting a thousand difficulties, and patiently enduring the sneer of contempt and the scoffs that vulgar pride and ignorance cast at merit in obscurity, gazes on the first sheets of his virgin muse wet from the press, and eyes exultingly the soft, pale ray of honour and fame dawning slowly o'er his long-beclouded horizon.

Thus, then, after all my anxieties, my hopes

my despairings, I have at length appeared in print! But what have been *my* struggles to obtain a little fame, compared with those of that literary prodigy in Germany,—Louisa Durbach, whom misfortune did not cease to persecute till she was forty years of age? At an early period of life, whilst watching her cattle, she wrote rude verses amid the fields and woods; in this she was accidentally assisted by a neighbouring shepherd, who, although they were divided by a river, contrived to lend her his whole library, consisting of *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Asiatic Banise*, a German romance, and *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. The contents of these volumes she devoured with all the avidity of an ardent mind. At the age of seventeen she married, and her life became one continued scene of toil and poverty. Yet, notwithstanding all her miseries, she still composed various pieces; and on the Sundays committed to paper those effusions to which, during the week and amid her daily labours, her mental powers had given birth. Becoming at an early age a widow, she was soon compelled by her mother to a second marriage, and her situation became still more wretched from increasing want, aggravated by the tyranny of an ignorant and cruel husband. Yet still her genius rose victorious over her miserable

circumstances, and in spite of the want of time, opportunity, and abject distress, she produced several poems. These procured her the friendship and encouragement of Professor Meyer, of Halle; and shortly after, a few of her productions appeared in print.

But the conquests of the King of Prussia occasioned her muse to put forth its full vigour. Her first triumphal Ode was *the Battle of Lowoschutz*; and the glory of her slowly dawning genius, so long obscured by misfortune's pelting storms and thick clouds of darkness, burst forth into full splendour, rivalling in radiance the refulgent star of Frederick. Yet still oppressed with poverty her fate was melancholy in the extreme; till Baron Cottwitz, a Silesian nobleman, passing through Glogau, (to which place she had gone, on the publication of her first Ode, with her husband and four children, for the purpose of gaining admittance to a bookseller's shop,) became acquainted with her merits, relieved her distresses, and carried her to Berlin. Here every tribute was paid to her extraordinary merits, and she was justly and universally admired.

I could not help sending a short abstract of this wonderful woman's life, to show you what powerful obstacles true genius might ultimately

surmount; and that there have been, and no doubt are still, men in the world, who, blest with noble minds and ample means and disdaining not lowly merit, are ever ready to shed the beams of cheering beneficence o'er the long and dismal darkness that hangs on the fate of the low-born minstrel.

I believe I forgot to tell you in my last letter, that on a late excursion to Salisbury in quest of subscribers, a gentleman introduced me to Mr. Shatford, the manager of the Salisbury company, to whom I showed the plot of the tragedy which I sent to Mr. Williams in London. He knew it instantly, and declared that an actor of that name put a tragedy, founded on the plot and bearing the same title as mine, into his hands some time since for revisal, passing it as his own production. Mr. S. added that he had made some alterations in it, and returned it to Williams again. So you see my poor tragedy is lost to me for ever, as I never took the precaution of writing a second copy.* Give me your free opinion of my poem, and believe me to be

Yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

* The author has never heard either of Mr. Williams or the Tragedy, from that hour to the present.

LETTER XXV.

My Dear Friend,

I have been lately indulged by my aunt Bess with a sight of the last will and testament of my ancient progenitor, mentioned in a former letter; who, being a gentleman of property, left several charitable bequeathments to the town of Corfe: namely, a certain portion of land for the support of an almshouse; a yearly sum for the continuance of the chimes; another sum for the purchase of an organ, which is said once stood above his tomb, and other benefactions. The sight of this honourable testimonial of my ancestor's worth and piety, excited my veneration and respect, and inspired me with a strong desire to make a pilgrimage to his tomb, erected in the north aisle of Corfe church.

Alas! how great was my surprise, how keen my disappointment, on arriving at the sacred edifice, to find that an ungrateful, sacrilegious, and ignorant rage for reparation and improvement had swept the ancient altar-monument with

its inscription and faded armorial bearings quite away, nor left a vestige to remind posterity of a generous benefactor! Revered and honoured shade, little didst thou think that one of thy future line, at the lapse of a hundred and fifty years, should in vain seek thy tomb to pay the tribute of a sigh to thy memory! That there would arise a generation of men in so short a period, who, though well knowing, if not partaking, of thy posthumous benevolence, designed to continue till time itself expires, could root out all remembrance of thee from the house of God, nor leave one stone upon another of thy last dark narrow dwelling! How vain the hope that marble or brass can perpetuate our fame to succeeding ages! Yet though thy sepulchre be removed from its place, and thy very name unknown to those who live on thy bounty, thy bones shall repose in peace beneath this sacred roof, nor shalt thou want a memorial of marble to eternalise thy name; for I, thy distant offspring, though generations have passed between us from the cradle to the grave, will consecrate thy dust, and raise to thy memory a monument that crumbleth not with the lapse of ages; even a place in the tale of the Minstrel, with whom dwelleth that envied and desired im-

mortality, which birth, nor pride, nor pomp can bestow!

Quitting Corfe, I proceeded on a visit to a friend, who resides on the southern coast of the Isle of Purbeck, washed by the British Channel, and near the fatal spot where the dreadful wreck of the Haleswell East Indiaman took place some twenty years ago. I could not lose an opportunity of visiting so interesting a scene. It was a calm and pleasant evening. The sun was going down below the western hills of the island, and spread a crimson glory o'er the skies; his yellow rays gilded the little solitary chapel that stood on the green and lofty promontory of St. Aldhelm, and in the low music of the ocean-breeze I seemed at intervals to hear the soft sweet evening hymn to the virgin of the lonely anchorite, who once dwelt on its storm-beat summit. The dark blue isle of Portland rose towering from the water's extremest verge amid the rich and golden splendours of the west, like the sapphire portal to some palace of peace and blessedness amid the skies. I sat me down on the brink of the cliffs, which here, in many places, are very lofty and almost perpendicular, to contemplate the grandeur of the prospect. The clouds, that seemed to hang motionless over

the green ocean's southern brim, embosoming the refracted beams of the glowing sun, presented a range of sublime though faint scenery that appeared the shores of another country, where Alps piled on Alps, covered with shadowy forests, or crowned with a diadem of snow, or capt with radiant flames, rose beauteously to view. Rocks of the richest tints, with silver waterfalls, gleamed here and there; and lakes of liquid pearl spread far and wide. Amid empurpled valleys the fairy palace, with alabaster portals, o'ertopped the embowering shades, and the gothic war-castle, with its irregular turrets, graced in regal pride the rugged and isolated steep. The vessels, with their white sails, gliding across the blue surface of the deep below, gave animation and reality to a picture that no earthly pencil could hope to equal. The silvery waves broke on the surrounding rocks at my feet in such sad, such melodious murmurs, as if some nymph of the ocean, from her deep-toned shell of magic sounds, had flung the wild dirge-notes of wo o'er those ruthless billows, that, in the night of tempests and shipwreck, closed for ever on the heads of beauty, innocence, and youth, regardless of a daughter's shrieks and an agonized father's last groan, perishing in each other's close embrace!

" How unavailing youth, and wealth, and power,
From death's insatiate grasp his prey to save ;
How powerless to protract, for one short hour,
The mortal stroke, the triumph of the grave !"

How different that hour of stormy peril and death to the present scene of tranquillity and delight! Now the music-lisping waters like a modest lover gently kiss these rocks, and retire as if abashed at the freedom they have taken, while the sunbeam dances lightly on the many coloured waves. Then roared the felon winds; and the mountain-rolling surge rose to the skies! Thick darkness covered the deep, save when the sulphury lightning streamed from the shattered clouds, and showed for a moment the unmasted vessel reeling to and fro, like a drunken man, amid the devouring breakers! How dashed the mighty waters against these hideous precipices, while cliff and cavern rebellowed to the mingled roar of thunders, winds, and waves!

What frightful cry was that which rang through the din of conflicting elements? Alas, the helmless vessel hath struck!—Her ribs are broken against the rugged rocks; the overwhelming waters rush in on every side! Authority and subordination are at an end. The

mariners fly here and there like wretches bereaved of sense, and heed nought but to save themselves from the horrors of a yawning grave!

"The vessel, while the dread event draws nigh,
Seems more impatient o'er the waves to fly:
Fate spurs her on:—thus issuing from afar,
Advances to the sun some blazing star;
And as it feels th' attraction's kindling force,
Springs onward with accelerated course.
With mournful look the seamen eyed the strand
Where Death's inexorable jaws expand:
Swift from their minds elaps'd all dangers past,
As, dumb with terror, they beheld the last.
Now on the trembling shrouds, before, behind,
In mute suspense they mount into the wind.
The genius of the deep, on rapid wing,
The black eventful moment seem'd to bring;
The fatal sisters on the surge before
Yok'd their infernal horses to the prore:
* * * * * * *
Uplifted on the surge to heaven she flies,
Her shattered top half buried in the skies;
Then headlong plunging thunders on the ground,
Earth groans, air trembles, and the deeps resound!
Her giant bulk the dread concussion feels,
And, quivering with the wound, in torment reels:
So reels, convuls'd with agonizing throes,
The bleeding bull beneath the murderer's blows.—
Again she plunges!—Hark! a second shock

Tears her strong bottom on the marble rock:
Down on the vale of Death, with dismal cries,
The fated victims shuddering roll their eyes
In wild despair; while yet another stroke
With deep convulsion rends the solid oak:
Till, like the mine in whose infernal cell
The lurking demons of destruction dwell,
At length asunder torn her frame divides,
And crashing spreads in ruin o'er the tides!"

What a heart-rending scene presents itself to my view in the cabin of the late gallant, but now surge-rent vessel! There stands the captain, a silent but majestic image of despair, wringing his hands in inexpressible grief: while round him cling his lovely daughters and nieces in breathless terror. But fruitless their shrieks, and unavailing all their prayers and tears. O, what unspeakable anguish wrung the father's heart, as he gazed on those lovely and innocent creatures hanging round his neck, and imploring his protection in vain! Who but a tender parent can conceive what an agony of insupportable sorrow in that fatal hour overwhelmed his soul!

The mate enters to inform him that the females cannot escape,—that all hope for *them* is finally lost. How appalling that cry of despair, which burst at once from every heart! Who could hear

it, and not in *their* miseries forget his own? A rope is thrown from the cliffs by some who had already climbed the dark and horrid steep, and the captain is implored speedily to attempt his own deliverance. Can misery come in a shape more terrible, more excruciating to the soul of man? The waters are gushing in upon them; the merciless billows flash above their heads; the lightnings stream through the yawning wreck, to light them down the dismal gulphs of death; the shriek of mangled wretches, dashed by relentless breakers on the sharp-pointed rocks, is heard on the rushing wings of the tempest; while the roaring of the ocean is as the roaring of a hungry lion seeking his prey! And yet the wretched father may escape:—but he must escape alone!

"The swelling flood,
Like a stanch murderer steady to his purpose,"

gains every instant upon them:—a few moments and all is lost. He feels the close, the convulsive grasp of his drowning children. That look, that dying look of filial love and misery from the upcast eye, streaming with tears, of an idolized daughter cut off in beauty's bloom, has annihilated the last wish that clings to the heart of

man. He greatly scorns existence, unblest with his lovely, his amiable offspring: "No, I will not leave you!" he exclaimed, straining them still more closely to his bursting heart, "We will perish, my children, together!"

Onward rolls the mountain-billow, and onward comes the answering thunder-peal, filling the hollow concave of the skies with their roar. The heaving wreck yawns asunder: the last faint shriek passed swiftly along the echoing cliffs; and death with darkness sat on the solitary wave of the sea!

The shepherd, as he pens his flocks in the neighbouring valleys at eventide, hears a mournful wailing come over the waters, that foretels the rising tempest; and 'twixt the pauses of the night-blast, ring the shrill screamings of despair. around the surge-smote and lonely promontory of St. Aldhelm: while shapes of light and beauty rise from the deep caverns of the ocean, and fling a supernatural glory o'er the horrors of the howling storm.

Yours, dear Frank,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXVI.

H——, Devonshire.

DEAR FRANK,

You will be much surprised at seeing my letter dated from this town,—so remote from my native village. But the fact is, a gentleman of Weymouth, who expressed himself much pleased with my poem lately published, understanding I wished to obtain a situation, recommended me to Mr. T——, of Dorchester, whose eldest son keeps a respectable academy in this place, where I now am engaged as an assistant. The old gentleman was sufficiently well pleased with my address, poetic compositions, &c., to advise an immediate personal application to his son. He favoured me with his warmest recommendations, and I arrived here with such expedition, that I had no time previously to make you acquainted with my journey.

Yesterday Mr. T. took me with him in his gig to Taunton. The extensive prospect from the summit of the Black Downs, of the highly-cultivated vale in which that fine town stands, was

the most beautiful I ever beheld,—reminding me of the once-delicious and enchanting scenery of Canaan's fertile land, which Moses saw from the top of mount Nebo. On our return we were overset, but no injury was sustained by either of us. I like Mrs. T. much; and my fellow-assistant is very friendly.

A tragedy and farce are performed by the young gentlemen of this academy every winter; and the pieces are shortly to be fixed on, in which we are to exert our dramatic abilities at the next Christmas vacation. It is said that the late assistants at this school shone greatly in the characters they sustained; and it is hoped and expected that we shall likewise excel. I long to commence the rehearsals, of which we are to have not a few. But as my time is now wholly occupied, I must conclude, remaining as ever,

Your sincere friend,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXVII.

H——.

My Dear Frank,

I am far from being happy in my present situation. Mr. T. is grown illiberal and reserved. He will allow me no opportunity or means, even between school-hours, to improve in any one branch of learning whatever. This is very hard; but it seems to be my fate to be oppressed and kept back, go where I will.

We all seem to get on well in our dramatic characters, and it is confidently anticipated from our promising rehearsals that we shall outdo all former achievements in theatrical science, that this academy has yet effected. For my own part, I have been so thwarted and prevented by the cruelty and obstinacy of others from continuing my studies, that I have given up all hopes, for the present, of literary advancement, and devote myself wholly to the improvement of such dramatic powers as I may possess; for I am determined, if possible, to excel in some department or other of the arts. It would savour of egotism

to repeat the encomiums I have received on my first histrionic attempts; but they are encouraging, and induce me to persevere. Our tragedy is a compilation from several of the historical plays of Shakspeare, and is entitled *The Roses*. It ends where *Richard III.* begins, with the death of Henry VI. in the tower, where, he is stabbed by the Duke of Gloucester; this part is assigned to me.

I have not heard for a long time from my dear mother, which makes me quite unhappy. You will again say this is a poor short letter; but consider, I am not now master of my own time, as formerly; I therefore must conclude, by subscribing myself

Yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXVIII.

H——.

My Dear Friend,

I have been so much engaged in preparing for the Christmas vacation, that I was unable sooner to acquaint you with our progress. Mr. T. had a painter at the Academy for a whole month, employed in executing some very handsome scenery for our grand performance. He is clever in his profession. I embraced every possible opportunity of being with this artist, while at his labours; and have so far improved by it, that I think I could now paint a tolerable scene myself. Our school-room, which is of ample dimensions, has been all bustle and confusion for the last week. Desks have been removed and piled on one another to form a gallery; and carpenters employed to erect a temporary stage, and make trap-doors into a large room below, for us sons of the buskin and the sock to dress in, and retreat to at our exits from the busy scene. We were all in high glee during these mighty preparations, being letter-perfect in our several parts, and each longing for the happy moment when he should make his debût before the ladies and gentlemen of H——, or convince them by his re-

appearance how much he was improved, since the last vacation, in the dramatic art. I was not one of the least anxious of this joyous company, be assured; and had written a prologue to be spoken by one of the boys before the commencement of the play; but after he had got it by heart, Mr. T. was so capricious as not to suffer him to speak it. However it is but justice to state that Mrs. T., from the very beginning of our theatrical drilling, warmly encouraged me: she kindly applauded my progressive improvement, and complimented handsomely my performance of Gloucester, and of Gregory in *The Mock Doctor*.

At length the eventful and long-wished-for night arrived. The doors were thrown open, and the theatre was thronged with genteel company. We were all dressed, for our respective parts,—I will not say in exact costume, or perfectly characteristic, but as well as could be managed. The ladies of H—— had been very liberal, and lent robes, scarfs, feathers, and other gear wherewith to furnish the wardrobe of our *corps dramatique*. Many a youthful heart now palpitated with hope and fear, as though the destiny of their future lives hung on the failure or success of that night's enterprise. The bell rang: universal silence prevailed: the curtain

rose, and the play commenced. Shouts of applause proclaimed the pleasure and admiration of an enlightened audience, and were the heart-cheering signals of our merit and renown. Suffice it to say, my dear Frank, that both the tragedy and entertainment went off without any disaster or blunder to mar the amusement of the delighted assembly, or to militate against the unqualified approbation bestowed on our exertions.

The London papers, in a few days after, rang with our praises; and, believe me, 'tis not from vanity I speak it, when I tell you that the warmest encomiums were lavished on your humble servant. Yet such was the increasing illiberality of T., who should in common justice have generously repaid my exertions with encouragement and kindness, that after the newspaper criticisms had been read at the breakfast-table, he would not suffer me to copy a single line; and either burnt or locked them up to prevent their falling into my hands.

To-morrow all the young gentlemen, except two, leave the academy for their respective homes; and in a few days I shall likewise return to my friends at L——, there to remain during the recess, and to which place your next letter must be addressed.

Adieu, my dear friend!

LETTER XXIX.

Stowey, Somersetshire.

DEAR FRANK,

EVENTS so unexpected and extraordinary have recently occurred, that I shall now attempt to give you some account of what has transpired since I last left L——. At the expiration of the Christmas vacation, I repaired to Dorchester on my intended return to H—— academy; but judge of my surprise when informed by the elder Mr. T. that his son had just advised him that he had no further need of my services, and should not expect me again at H——. I will not animadvert on such conduct: you will see it in its true light. The father's repeated declaration that I should make his house my home till I could secure another situation, will sufficiently mark *his* opinion of the transaction. Such disinterested generosity speaks a truly worthy heart. But as it was quite uncertain when I should obtain any other engagement, and unable to endure the idea of living under perpetual obligation, I resolved (perhaps in an evil hour) to try my fortune on the public stage. Be not

hasty to condemn the conduct of your unhappy friend. What vast applause, what patronage of the great and noble, what riches and fame has not the young Roscius obtained by his theatrical abilities? I have been flattered of late for similar attainments; other resources fail; misfortune and disappointment have hitherto followed all my attempts, and the haughty severity of a master sickened me to the soul. This seems the only road open to me; and it might ultimately lead to splendour and renown.

But to return. Just as I was about to quit Dorchester, a letter was received from T. of H—— by his father, offering as a palliation for his injustice, to receive me at the academy for a certain period, when something else might offer. This I rejected, but returned thither to receive the salary due to me, and then immediately sat off for Taunton, where I was informed a company of players were performing.

"The world was all before me;"

yet though I could not choose "my place of rest," I trust a gracious providence was, and always will be "my guide."

On my arrival, I found the manager of the theatre a gentlemanly personage, of some literature, and much knowledge of the world. I dined

with him once or twice, but found him unwilling to engage me as a performer in his company. The reason, as I have since learnt, was, that he thought me a runaway youth, whose friends he supposed would be very soon in search of me. Not succeeding according to my expectations, I left Taunton, and came to this place, where I was presently enlisted under a leader named Mac Lear. Some description of him and his establishment I will attempt to give you.

From the time when I first read plays, and understood that men and women personated before an assembly of people with studied and impassioned eloquence, and clad in splendid and appropriate habits, heightened by beautiful scenery, those different characters which the poet by his wondrous and innocently-magic art conjures from the tomb again to life, or embodies from the creation of his own mind, I had always associated with my ideas of such personages something extremely romantic, — nay, almost superhuman. To me they seemed to live and act in a fairy world, full of astonishing adventure and interesting incident; with, generally, a just distribution of good and evil, after a series of trials and disappointments totally different to those scenes in which the vulgar and every-day

occurrences of real life take place: while their pleasant discourse, enriched with attic wit and all the beauties of the muses, was what the ancients called the language of the gods. These wild imaginings were not a little strengthened by the splendid scenery and wonderful machinery of the London theatres,—the only public places of the kind I had ever seen,—the fascination of their music, and the gorgeous and imposing habiliments of their performers. With such romantic impressions of the votaries of Thespis on my mind, how inexpressible was my astonishment at finding the illusion completely dissipated by an introduction to the family and company of Mac Lear, whom I soon knew to be a set of mere human beings, of the lowest attainments and most vitiated tastes!

But the best possible idea I can convey of the manager and his followers, will be by sending you *verbatim* a scene which I witnessed at his lodgings the second morning after my arrival. I am now called to rehearsal, and must therefore conclude. My next shall contain the whole dialogue. In the interim

I remain
Yours in sincerity,
SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXX.

Stowey.

FRIEND FRANK,

WISHING to see the manager respecting the part I was to open in on the public stage, I called the other morning before breakfast at his lodgings, and found he had just gone out. The window-seat of his apartment was filled with playbooks, most of them without binding, and in a very shabby state. Over the fire-place hung an old sword without a scabbard; a shield formed of pasteboard, with a wretched painting in the centre; and a helmet of the same materials, which still retained a few spots of the leaf-gold with which it was once covered, and was, moreover, adorned with clusters of glass buttons and crowned with a plume of broken feathers of various kinds and colours. On a table in the middle of the room appeared the fragments of the last night's banquet, consisting of several clean-picked bones, pieces of potatoes, dry crusts of bread, scraps of cheese, and a few onions. In the midst of all stood a glass bottle, with the remains of a mould candle stuck

into the neck, and by its side a brown jug, drained quite dry. The other parts of the room were strewed with the various paraphernalia of the stage, such as dresses, wigs, rusty daggers, pieces of mock armour, &c.

Soon after my entrance, Mrs. Bromley, the mother of Mrs. Mac Lear, came down stairs, with a dirty squalling brat in her withered and skinny arms. Her figure and appearance nearly resembled the description of the muttering witch gathering sticks, as drawn by the masterly hand of Otway in *The Orphan.* After politely giving me the salutation of the morning, (for alas! she had seen better days,) the old woman thus began,

"Sally! Why Sall! I say.—Hush, my dear, hush!—Sally! O genitivo! if I wasn't the most quiet, peaceable, patient lamb on earth, I should run mad! Here they leave me, sir, a poor old trembling soul, with one foot in the grave and the other just on the brink, to nurse, and cook, and go to market.—Why Sall! thou lazy, brazen-faced hussy!—Hush! my little beauty," but the more she endeavoured to soothe the filthy urchin, the more outrageous it grew.

At length, when the old woman had nearly bawled herself hoarse, Sally made her appearance. Full of ideas of her own superlative merit on the

stage, Mrs. Mac Lear conceived it beneath the dignity of a tragedy-queen to nurse her own child, or perform the least domestic duty; and although often, as I have learnt, without the means of procuring a dinner, had hired this poor ragged-looking country wench as a nurse and waiting-maid. She jointly shares with the poor old mother every household drudgery, while my lady actress spends the whole day reading novels and romances.

"Here I'ze be, mistress. Do you want I?" said Sally as she entered.

"Do you want I?" repeated Mrs. Bromley in a bitter tone. "Here, take the child, you stupid vixen, and take that with it," giving the poor wench a box on the ear. This the girl did not seem to relish, and kept muttering something between her teeth, which I could not understand.

"O, you dirty, impudent hussy! you are going to be saucy to me, are you? I, that am so cool, that am never in a passion. O, hic, hoc, genitivo! I could trample you under my feet, if I had the strength! O, that ever I should live to hear myself abused in such a vilifying manner!"

"I am sure I zaid naught to affront ye," returned Sall.

"What! you will dare to insult me to my face,

will you? and put yourself into such vulgar outrageous furies? I shall be knocked down presently: I should'nt wonder if the wench were to murder me. O, you wicked, daring wretch! to abuse a poor, old, feeble creature in such a manner, who has hardly the power to say a word in her own defence."

"I think you got plenty to zay for yourself," replied Sall.

"What's that you are muttering of, saucebox? Was ever a quiet, harmless, religious woman like me, abused in such a brutish manner! I declare, wench, I am afraid to look at you: O, thou hast a vile murderous look!" Heaven preserve me! If you are not discharged I can't live another day in the house! I declare I am in bodily fear every hour: and when a frail creature like me is so provoked, how hard it is for the spirit to subdue the fleshly passions that work in my members, as dear Mr. Simmonds said last night in his lecture at the love-feast." By the bye Mrs. Bromley always attends the methodist meetings on non-playnights; although I am sorry to say she does not seem a whit the better for her religious professions.

"Love-feast!" muttered Sall, "I wish I could zee zomething like a good mutton-feast, for I

have been half starved, I know, ever since I came to live with you."

"Hold your peace, you prating jade!" said the old lady, "and take the dear little, sweet, pretty babe.—What, you will keep talking, will you? Why I can't hear myself speak, for your outrageous tongue. And am I to be abused in such a manner by you? I, who am a woman of family and consequence? But this comes of strolling:—trotting about from place to place. O, that ever my unfortunate daughter,—my dear Maria, should have taken a fancy to the stage; and worse than all, although possessed of the united merits of a Jordan and a Siddons, thrown herself away on a graceless, bogtrotting, Irish manager, without either towns, scenery, or wardrobe! I, who have lived in such credit as the wife of an eminent apothecary.—Ah, my poor dear Mr. Bromley, what have I suffered since your death! O, that I were at Bath again with my other daughter, who is so respectably married to Mr. F—— the organist."

Mac Lear now entered, and after exchanging compliments with me, thus began with his mother-in-law:

"Well, old mouser, what's the matter? By the powers, you are an improvement on the witch

of Endor this morning." "Och! you are amiably in snuff as usual,—bedaubed from stem to starn."

"Well, you Irish brute, a pinch of snuff is the only comfort of my life."

"Och, faith!" said Mac Lear, "then from the numerous fragments you scatter about, one might suppose your comforts were many and big."

"Don't vent your poor witticisms on me; but let us know if you have brought the piece of mutton I bargained for with the butcher last night."

"Arrah," replied the Hibernian, "you may make yourself aisy about that, ould honey; for after daling with the fellow and paying him the last two good-looking shillings I had in the world, I held the mate with one hand behind the tail of my surtout, you see, becase I wouldn't be after lugging it along the street like a butcher's boy. But och! ill luck to the hour in which I did that thing; for I hadn't gone far, before I met Mr. Saunders the carpenter, who beginning to praise my performance of Osmond in *The Castle Spectre*, declared that he had never seen it acted so well before,—no, not even in London: and no doubt but he spoke truth. While I stood listening to these justly-desarved encomiums, I felt something pull me backwards with the devil of a twitch;

and turning round to see what it was, och, thunder and turf! I beheld my beautiful paice of mutton running down the street in the mouth of the carpenter's infernal great dog! I called out thief! lustily, and ran with all my might after the ugly hellhound; but turning a corner full speed, I fell down, and before I could get up again the plunderer was out of sight. So the only recompense I had for the loss of my mutton, was the mud which my clothes was after plentifully picking up out of the dirty street."

"Ah, you have charmingly realized the fable of the crow and the fox," said Mrs. Bromley.

"Never mind, ould one; you must set your wits to work again, to find out how we shall raise the wind once more for another dinner."

"Dinner indeed," returned Mrs. Bromley; "you must be content to feast on the highly relished flattery of the carpenter. Surely such *just* encomiums, and from so *learned* a judge of histrionic merit, will more than repay the loss of a perishable piece of 'flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats;' this will surely serve you to exist on for more than a day, though I suspect you will find it but flatulent diet."

"Och! for the matter o' that, honey, all words are wind, to be sure; but can't you now, for

once, bamboozle the butcherman into a little trust, till to-morrow?"

"No: we must go without dinner another day, through your cursed love of flattery."

"By St. Patrick!" cried Mac Lear, "that has been the song your ould windpipes have whistled for these three days past: and very pretty music it is to the ears of a man who has only a few cold Irish gooseberries to peck at, and half a dozen about him 'cawing,' as the starved apothecary in *The Honeymoon* says, 'for provender, like a nest of new-waked rooklings half unfledged.'"

"Ah, we are all of us," returned Mrs. Bromley, "more than *half* unfledged, God knows! The pawnbrokers have nearly stripped us: we shall soon be all in Adam's buff."

"Faith, then you will be a walking Egyptian mummy," said Mac Lear.

"Ah! I am always the butt of your low ribaldry: but the grace which is implanted in me, will give me patience under all my trials."

"Don't be after using any of your cant; but let me have that bit of a gown you had given you last week, and I'll lend it to my uncle, who keeps a bartering shop with the sign of the three globes, for a couple o' shillings. You know Madam Fortune has stripped me, and now she must begin with you."

"Begin! indeed. Genitivo! Begin! forsooth. She has begun a long time:—ever since I had the honour of trotting the country with you. I'm sure there isn't a town or village we have entered, but I have been obliged to drop some relic in it of former splendour, and so has my poor dear Maria; till your fine managerial scheme has picked us both almost as naked as Æsop's crow."

Mrs. Mac Lear now entered, with a novel in her hand. "Here comes Maria," continued the old lady; "always reading, laughing, romping, or singing, though ruin stare her in the face. O, I shall go mad! Cursed be those infernal romances:—I wish they were all sunk to the bottomless pit! They are the bane of all that is good or virtuous, as dear Mr. Simmonds says. O, if you would but attend his pious exhortations, you would tear such ungodly books to atoms.—Why the devil don't you mind what I say, and not put yourself into such abominable irreligious passions: I'm sure my soul is grieved to behold the wickedness of your ways. It's no wonder we have so few, go where we will, to attend the theatre; that we are half-starved and half-clothed; the reading those vile works brings down a curse upon us. You'll surely be all starved here, and

eternally damned hereafter if you don't leave off reading those immoral, those unholy productions."

"Bless me! what has put you in such a passion this morning, mother?" said Mrs. Mac Lear.

"Passion! I should be in a passion, you wretch, if I didn't endeavour to subdue the wicked one within me. I feel him rising here; but I think on what dear Mr. Simmonds says, and curb the vile workings of the crafty one that ensnareth mankind. But let me tell you there is no dinner again to-day for you."

"Well, never mind," said Maria; "we shall have a better appetite for our frugal supper, when the play is over."

"Och! you are after reconciling it that way, are you, honey?"

"Reconcile indeed!" replied the old woman.

"Surely, mother; for cast but the sweet smile of patience at adversity's rugged frown, and she will wear a face of softer mould."

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Bromley, "that's a vile quotation from some abominable romance. Well, I trust you and your husband will be able to banquet daintily to-day on fiction and flattery."

Mac Lear then told his wife the sad tale of the lost mutton, which only seemed to move her

laughter. I now stepped forward and assured them they should not want for a dinner, as I would lend them more than sufficient for the wants of the day. The Hibernian poured forth a volume of thanks, Maria danced and sung, the old lady smoothed the wrinkled fury of her hag-like brow, and talked of Elijah being fed by ravens; while even poor Sally, nursing the child by the fire-side, gave me a look that spoke her gratitude and joy at the prospect of once more having a good dinner. Mrs. Mac Lear assured me of repayment when the play was over; adding with an air of confidence,

"There will be a good house to-night. *Pizarro* cannot fail of attraction, as it has never been performed here. And then your first appearance in that character must draw ——"

"Ay," interrupted Mac Lear, "and the style in which I have got it up must please."

"Style! indeed," exclaimed Mrs. Bromley with a sneer.

"Ay, by the powers, style too. Why, for the first scene, where you, Maria, are discovered as Elvira sleeping in the tent, I have borrowed a large pair of red-flowered curtains, and spread them out on boughs in the centre of the stage, so as to form an elegant pavilion."

"O, charming!" cried Mrs. Mac Lear.

"Then for Alonzo's first scene—och! no, I forgot; we cut that out in the country."

"You do!" I exclaimed; "why what will Pizarro be without an Alonzo?"

"Bother, man," said the manager, "you shall have an Alonzo, where you want him. Mr. Grimshaw shall double the part with Valverde. Then for the Temple of the Sun,—och! the audience will be so bothered with surprise,—I have procured an immense green rug, or coverlet, for the back scene; to which I have fastened some large pictures of *Death and the Lady*, *The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence*, with *Moses and Aaron in the Wilderness*, all painted in the most flaming colours ——"

"And very emblematical, to be sure, of the customs, dresses, and manners of the ancient Peruvians," said Mrs. Bromley.

"Hould your tongue! you ould croaking raven, and listen to the invention of my wonderful janius. For the splendid image of the glorious sun, the god of Peru, I have borrowed one of Farmer James's cart-wheels, and laid out last night two thirteens in gilt gingerbread,—kings and queens on horseback, coaches, watches, and all the shining gimcracks I could get,—and

fastened 'em on to the wheel; so that it looks, you see, as bright as the meridian sun, when it's setting over the hills of Killarney."

"The glory of your gingerbread sun is set long ago, I dare say, in the dark bowels of the rats and mice that nightly haunt the theatre," said Mrs. Bromley.

"No fear of that. I have taken care to guard against those thieves, by tying a cat to the wheel, and making a St. Catharine of her," and a general laugh ensued, for it was impossible longer to refrain.

"But the altar-piece, my dear," said Maria; "what will you contrive for that?"

"Arrah! let me alone for contrivance, my jewel. I shall place a high stool in the centre of the stage, and cover it with one of your spangled gowns, honey; and if that won't have a fine effect, then an Irishman has no taste, that's all."

"*One* of her gowns; then I suppose you would have her play Elvira without a gown. You know she has but one stage-dress to her back; and that is little better than half-saved from the dreadful wreck of her once-beautiful wardrobe. Confusion light on the wicked stage! I shall go distracted! Instead of profiting from dear

Mr. Simmonds's Friday evening's exhortation to meekness and patience, I shall be compelled to keep the infernal playhouse door, shivering with cold, and trembling with age and weakness. O, if I had'nt more patience than Job, I should run raving mad!"

"Hould your gab, you crazy ould crocodile," said Mac Lear.—"Then, my dear Maria, only think how we shall delight the audience with our divine acting!—you in Elvira, and I in Rolla. Faith! and I ought to be on the London boards, with my elegant action, fine figure, and Garrick-like powers of personification. But merit, now-a days, is totally disregarded; and here am I, an Irishman of right noble extraction, without the smallest bit of the brogue at all at all,—sheame on the world!—trotting about from village to village."

"But Mac Lear," said his wife, "how can you manage to have the fire to descend on the altar in the Peruvian temple?"

"Be aisy, my darling, we'll cut it out; by the powers, it is quite useless. The audience can suppose they see invisible fire descending, can't they?—I say, ould mouser, I must have a handsome dress for Rolla to-night. Have you put on the yellow fringe round my scarlet tunic?"

"No: for I havn't a halfpenny to buy a skein of thread."

"Here, here's one, mother," said Mrs. Mac Lear.

"O, fie upon you, child," replied the old lady, "you are as cheerful now, as if your lap were full of guineas; while my heart is breaking—"

Sally, who had been absent some little time, now came running in, saying a gentleman wanted to speak with her master respecting places in the pit for the ensuing evening; on which I took my leave, deferring the business I came on, till we should meet again at rehearsal. This letter is unpardonably long,—I will therefore at once conclude; and with every good wish for your happiness,

I remain

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXXI.

Stowey.

My Dear Friend,

I cannot think but in many points of your last letter, you are too severe on the profession of the stage and its classical amusements. You say that Cicero, speaking of the celebrated Roscius, observes, that he was so excellent an artist, that he seemed to be the only man living fit to act on the stage; but adds, that he was so virtuous a man, that he seemed to be the only one who, on account of the excellence of his character, should be totally exempt from the disgrace of appearing there. You might have added also, my friend, that Juvenal speaks in the most degrading terms of the stage. But though the ancient Romans considered the profession of an actor as disreputable, it was far different, let me tell you, with the Greeks. Amongst that enlightened people, the profession was considered most honourable; and many of its followers held offices of the highest dignity and importance in the state. They commanded armies in the field, and were

crowned with garlands of victory; they were made governors of towns and provinces, and acquitted themselves in those exalted stations with honour and renown, and gave universal satisfaction to the people. In fact, the Greek actors were persons of good birth and education, generally orators or poets of the first rank: sometimes kings themselves performed on the theatres; and Cornelius Nepos assures us that to appear on the public stage was not in the least injurious to any man's character or honour.

I have somewhere met with the following observations of M. de la Bruyere. Speaking of that inconsistency of behaviour which the French nation shows towards players, he says "Amongst the Romans, the profession of an actor was infamous; amongst the Greeks it was honourable: we think of them like the Greeks, but behave to them like the Romans. Nothing can be more inconsistent and absurd than for crowds of persons of both sexes to meet every evening in a house to applaud and admire a set of persons, whom they look upon as damned, and in a state of reprobation. We ought to be less severe in our opinion concerning the profession of a player, or less favourable to their persons and performance."

Voltaire declares "that the English are free

from this absurd and groundless prejudice," asserting as a proof that Mrs. Oldfield was buried in Westminster Abbey. But he is equally mistaken with Mons. du Boissi, who observes in his *La Frivolité*, that amongst the English

"Le vice deshonore, et non pas le talent:"

that vice only is dishonourable in this country, but that genius is the reverse.

But although in England actors are not, as in France, shut out from all the holy rites of religion, and their bodies even denied Christian burial; yet nothing can be more contradictory and absurdly ridiculous, than that vast difference of behaviour which is manifested in England towards those players who have the good fortune to be engaged at either of the great theatres in London, and their poor unfortunate brethren wandering in the depths of obscurity about the country. Let the private character of a provincial actor be unexceptionably moral, and his abilities in the most difficult of all professions excellent; if he has nothing but his profession to support him, he wanders in indigence and neglect: but let him, by some fortuitous circumstances, obtain a situation on the London boards, where his merits have every possible

advantage by which to show themselves in full perfection, and should he succeed, the opulent and the noble crowd about him and vie with each other in the display of the greatest respect, the most polite and delicate attentions. Thus he who before strolled from town to town, often hungry and scantily arrayed, unnoticed and unaided, becomes at once the companion of nobles, and banquets at the luxurious tables of the great.

Yet the man is but the same he was, when pining in obscurity and want. Nay, his sudden elevation and affluence, aided by the ill example of his superiors, may, perhaps, corrupt his manners; till wealth yielding full scope to his appetites, he sinks into the grossest depths of sensual depravity. Yet the respect of the world waits on him to the grave, and his ashes are deposited with all the solemn pomp of a real hero's funeral, beneath the same roof with warriors, priests, and kings: while dukes and nobles contend for the honour of supporting the pall that covers his coffin!*

From whence can such strange conduct proceed? It is to be feared, not from the value which is attached to talent; but from that sordid and contemptible deference which is paid to

* See an account of Garrick's funeral.

paltry wealth. Dr. Smollet justly observes in his character of the English, "Every man is respected in proportion to the riches he possesseth, without the least respect or retrospect to birth or station."* Could the country player by his profession support an equipage and a train of servants, like his more fortunate brother in town, respect and observance would instantly await him wherever he appeared: and those who now affect to treat him with scorn and indifference, would be the very first to bow with cringing obsequiousness in his presence. In answer to what you have said respecting the immorality of the stage, I shall beg leave to send you an extract or two from a Pamphlet on that subject, published by a gentleman belonging to the York and Hull company.—

"For the truly Christian purpose of degrading at least an unoffending portion of the community, the Scriptures have been ransacked; much industry has been employed in the search of passages prohibitory of theatrical amusements, and much ingenuity expended in the vain endeavour of attaching to such passages an interpretation foreign to the intention of their Divine

* "The distinction of wealth is gradually absorbing every other." *Newton's Letters.*

Author. But I confidently assert, and I call upon you to falsify the assertion if you can, that in no portion of the Sacred Writings can there be found a prohibition of theatricals, either direct or implied; from no portion of the Sacred Writings have you yourself been able to extract a single text,—nay, a solitary expression, which, with all your expository skill, can be brought to bear upon the question, or wear the semblance of an argument in your favour.

"Indeed it is difficult to conceive by what novel arts of interpretation passages such as the following, can be made to bear a construction unfavourable to the drama: 'Thou shalt die.' 'Give not thy heart to vanity.' 'Thou shalt not make to thyself the likeness of any thing in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth.' Yet these are the irrefragable and scriptural proofs so loudly vaunted, and repeated with such confidence. The last-mentioned passage in particular, exhibiting nothing more than a very necessary command to a people recently reclaimed from a strong propensity to idolatrous worship, has been discovered by modern ingenuity to involve a solemn denunciation against dramatic exhibitions, and triumphantly proclaimed as decisive of the question. If

such expositions of Scripture be admissible, this language is broad and decisive indeed,—decisive of almost every refinement and elegant usage of life; of every thing, in short, which distinguishes civilized man from the wild rover of the forest: comprehending the poet, the painter, the sculptor, the architect, in one wide sweeping denunciation; condemning the proudest achievements of art as worse than nugatory baubles, and denouncing those as decidedly hostile to religion who have hitherto ranked among the special benefactors of mankind.

"It has been represented, also, as extremely indecorous and militating directly against the passage under consideration, to make those convulsive indications of approaching dissolution, from the contemplation of which nature turns with an involuntary shudder, the subject of irreverent exhibition before a promiscuous multitude: but the *Jupiter tonans* of the dramatic heaven has been marked out as still more particularly obnoxious; and to introduce into representation thunder and lightning, and all the more awful phenomena of nature, has been pronounced nothing less than a daring invasion of the privilege of the Deity himself.

"To attempt a serious refutation of objections

so manifestly absurd, would be to partake of the ridicule which they excite. If the tasteless depreciators of an amusement the most instructive and refined that human ingenuity can devise *must* persevere in their invectives, let them at least observe a little more regard to justice in their anger, and consistency in their arguments; nor preposterously dictate limitations to one artist, which they would be ashamed of prescribing to another. Instance the painter:—the whole visible creation may be considered as one immense gallery of subjects for the exercise of his talent; nothing is sacred from his pencil; the sublime exhibition of the conflicting elements, or those still more awful convulsions which agitate the human frame, constitute his most animated field of operation; and that must be a fastidious delicacy indeed, which could condemn in dramatic representation what is not only tolerated, but lavishly applauded on the canvas.

"Such is the formidable array of argument which the industry of our opponents has extracted from the Sacred Volumes; and if after so much learned investigation better have not been produced, the reason is pretty obvious;—better could not be found: and we confidently conclude, that the Scriptures do not contain a single expression,

which, by any license of language or effort of ingenuity, can be tortured into a condemnation of theatrical amusements. To the *negative* argument, deduced from this profound silence of the Scriptures on a subject of such vital importance to the interests of society, may be added the *positive* testimony of St. Paul himself, who does not scruple to enforce the truths he preaches in the energetic language of the ancient dramatists; and as you, Sir, must know frequently cites their sentiments in splendid confirmation of his own.

"But I am fully aware of what your ingenuity has suggested, to supply this unfortunate deficiency of condemnatory matter. The amusements of the theatre, we are told, if not *formally*, are *implicitly* denounced by the Scriptures, as being in their very nature immoral. Slanderous aspersion! The stage repels the charge with the contempt it merits. In confutation of the daring calumny, she appeals to those productions which she daily announces for the amusement of the public, and nightly submits to their critical inspection;—the productions of great and learned characters;—of men all eminent for talent,—many of them distinguished by their piety and Christian virtues, and not a few dignified by the sacred function of the Ministry.

"Indeed, scarcely a production of the earlier, or more recent drama, but, on the contrary, involves some excellent moral,—delights by the elegance of its language and the splendour of its imagery,—and powerfully excites our sympathies by the charm of its sentiment and the interest of its situations. This character must be understood as exclusively applying to the earlier and the more recent dramatic writings; as it is not in contemplation to defend the morality of the theatre during the reign of Charles the Second. The productions of that 'lubricous and adulterate age,' make no part of the acting drama of the present times. The stage disclaims them: and they have consequently been long consigned to merited oblivion. At the same time it must be remembered, that this lamentable perversion of the stage was not the cause, but the consequence of the fashionable depravity of the period."

"That the generality of dramatic writings are of a highly beneficial tendency, every frequenter of the theatre must know. The plays of *Hamlet*, *Richard*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *As you Like It*, *George Barnwell*,—in short, every favourite acting piece of the present day, will bear me out in this assertion. No where is virtue arrayed in more imposing and attractive attributes; no

where are the ravages of unlicensed passion depicted in more appalling colours. Can imagination exalt our frail and selfish nature to more angelic purity, more filial piety, more reckless devotion, than constitute the characters of Cordelia and Edgar in the tragedy of *Lear?* or can the contrary dispositions wear a more repulsive form than they exhibit in Edmund, Goneril, and Regan? What lesson of the moralist can impart that thrilling interest to the darker and more vindictive workings of the spirit, which the master-hand of Shakspeare has impressed on his Richard, Macbeth, and Othello? These enduring monuments of genius 'give the loud lie' to the calumniators of the drama, and proudly vindicate the purity of her moral.

"Nor is this character confined to the 'gross and scope of the design'; but each particular scene has its own peculiar moral, and is fraught with insulated sentiments of exquisite beauty, recommended by a diction worthy of the purity it invests. Against a profession so well calculated to promote the best interests of morality, it is singular that a prejudice should ever have existed; such is, notwithstanding, the case;—prejudices which exercise an unlimited tyranny over the vulgar mind, and are not without their influence

even with many who ought to rank among the more enlightened."

"Yet if any profession be *intrinsically* reputable, it is that of the actor. This claim to respectability is founded on the combination of excellence, as well natural as acquired, indispensable to eminence in the drama; on the splendid share it boasts in the noblest achievements of the imitative arts; on the beauty, the variety, and magnificence of its means; and the dignity and importance of the ends proposed by them. The peculiar and indefinite feeling of respect which dramatic talent has been known to extort from persons the least disposed to concede it, is strengthened and increased by another cause,—the intimate connexion of the drama with the whole circle of the liberal arts; the peculiar nature of which (as the name implies) is to stamp a character of nobility on whatever comes within the sphere of their influence. The drama, indeed, may be considered the queen and mistress of the imitative arts: to her they minister and are subservient; she concentrates in herself the combined attractions of them all, and possesses others peculiarly and exclusively her own. Sculpture supplies her with attitude; Painting with scenery and costume; Poetry with language: and there

is not less truth than beauty in the muse of Campbell, when speaking of a celebrated living actor:

'His was the spell o'er hearts,
Which only acting lends;
The youngest of the sister Arts,
Where all their beauty blends:

For ill can Poetry express,
Full many a tone of thought sublime;
And Sculpture, mute and motionless,
Steals but *one* glance from time.

But by the mighty Actor's art,
Their wedded triumphs come;
Verse ceases to be airy thought,
And Sculpture to be dumb.'"

"Poetry addresses itself to the imagination and to the heart, through the medium of the ear: painting and sculpture speak to the eye alone. The dramatic art, uniting the power of *all* in one simultaneous operation upon both the senses, produces an effect proportionate to the threefold agency employed. When we combine into one view the inspiring aids of music, costume, and scenery, an artful construction of such incidents as are best calculated to act powerfully upon the mind, related in the moving language of poetry

and breathed in tones and accents adapted to convey the impressions to the soul,—not only with unimpaired, but added beauty,—we must allow that a perfect dramatic exhibition is the most rational, the most impressive, the most soul-subduing spectacle that imagination can conceive."

I cannot better conclude this subject, so well defended, than by subjoining the following anecdote, as a proof that there are some men in the profession, who bear not only an irreproachable character for honour and integrity, but have a regard for morals and rectitude of conduct:—Mr. Macready, whilst performing at a theatre under the management of the late Mr. Mansell, unnecessarily made use of an oath, contrary to the rules of Mr. Mansell's establishment; who, greatly to his credit, obliged all the performers who wantonly uttered any profane oath to forfeit the sum of five shillings, which was appropriated to the relief of sick and indigent actors. When settling with Mr. Macready for his stipulated salary, he deducted the sum required for a breach of his rules: Mr. Macready submitted to the fine with great cheerfulness, and upon inquiring to what purpose the money so obtained would be

applied, he gave a 10*l.* note towards the furtherance of so excellent an object, saying, "he wished from his heart all managers would adopt the same system, as nothing tended so much towards the fall of the drama, as this offensive custom."

As your epistles, my dear Frank, are every way pleasing and instructive, I hope to hear from you again very soon. Continue to exercise the utmost freedom in your remarks; and express yourself on all occasions with unreserved sincerity. Friendship confers upon you this privilege, and I shall always require it at your hands.

I remain

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXXII.

Dunster.

DEAR FRANK,

WE have been for some time removed to the town of Dunster, which principally consists of one street. It has a market on Fridays, but little or no trade. The castle stands on the south side of the town, and crowns in venerable antiquity the summit of a natural hill. To the west it overlooks the woods of a deep and narrow glen; and to the north and east commands a fine view of the Bristol Channel, with here and there a white sail skimming its azure bosom, and beyond its farmost shores a long line of those blue and distant mountains that border the opposite coast of Wales.

The entrance to the precincts of the castle is through a lofty portal in the centre of a ponderous square tower. The drawbridge and the iron portcullis no longer bar the stranger's approach. The watchman stands not on the turret-top to descry the advancing banners of the foe; the horn of the warder disturbs no more the midnight echoes

that sleep in silence around the moss-grown battlements. From the gateway you ascend to the ancient and ivy-covered ramparts, which are now formed into a pleasant terrace, from whence is a most delightful prospect of land and water. Much of the once-rude and baronial magnificence of this castle is converted into the convenience and comfort of a modern dwelling; but the thick-ribbed walls of the donjon, or keep, that stand in gloomy solitude above the topmost mound, clothed in a mantle of eternal verdure, are left the desolate abode of the raven and the owl. This part, no doubt, is very ancient; for William Mohun of Dunster Castle, was made Earl of Dorset by the Empress Maud.

When I was shown the interior of the castle, I forgot all it contained in the contemplation of the royal closet, in which Prince Charles was concealed from his blood-thirsty pursuers. It still remains in its pristine state, and the entrance to it is completely hid by ancient tapestry. Alas! what must have been thy feelings, O hapless prince, as thou sat'st musing on thy fate within this narrow cell! A proscribed fugitive in thine own kingdom; thy subjects become rebels and enemies; thy sword broken in battle; an empire lost; thy throne usurped by regicides; and thy

kingly father murdered in cold blood! Here didst thou seek, and find, from the mad republicans a transient refuge; a short breathing-time from the pursuit of the fierce blood-hounds of rebellion that panted to drink the life-stream flowing from thy heart. The midnight clock from the lofty turret hath rung the knell of another departed day, but sleep is still far from thy tear-drenched pillow. The tramp of horses is heard at the rampart gates: the warder inquires "Who is there?" "The forces of the Parliament with the officers of justice, who demand to search the castle for the fugitive Charles Stuart," thunders forth the rough voice of a dark-bearded warrior; while the trumpet flings its battle-threatening notes on the weary breeze, the shrill tones float round the shattered walls of the lofty donjon, and awake the echoes of the hollow glen, whose dark-green groves sleep nodding in the moon-beam. Terror and alarm prevail throughout the castle. Its inhabitants dare not resist the formidable foe. Then, O prince of an ill-starred house, thou fled'st, half-despairing, to this secret retreat, —unknown to all but thy loyal and trembling host. The castle gates are thrown open, and the ministers of blood and death enter. In breathless suspense didst thou await thy fate: and thy heart

throbbed audibly, O warrior prince, with terror and hope, when from thy dark recess thou heardst the heavy footsteps of thy mail-clad pursuers approach this apartment;—when their voices, menacing death, rung hoarsely through the chamber of concealment.

They explore every known recess, every turret chamber and gloomy dungeon of the castle;—but in vain. Providence screened thee from their lynx-like eyes; and in after and happier days, restored thee, a long-absent exile, to thy joyous country, and the imperial throne of thy princely ancestors. Sacred is this cell of thy refuge! and to him who loves his nation's laws and his king, dear as the far-sought shrine to the pilgrim of old, who barefooted toiled o'er mountain, plain, and valley to tell his beads, and bow in pure devotion at the holy threshold of his honoured saint.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours always,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXXIII.

DEAR FRIEND,

WE yesterday arrived at the village of Linton on our way to Ilfracombe, and visited the wonderful Valley of Stones. Linton is one of the most beautifully romantic situations I ever beheld,—lying in a deep vale, surrounded on every side by a lofty amphitheatre of hills, except to the north, where it gradually descends with a wide opening to meet the deep-blue waves of the Bristol Channel. Perpetual verdure crowns this lovely and secluded dell, through which numerous crystal streams, continually flowing, form natural cascades here and there; the waters sparkle brilliantly in the sunbeams, as they leap from rock to rock, and spread a wild and everlasting chorus of melodious sounds throughout this, a second Tempé. These streams, as they wander on to meet the neighbouring ocean, divide the valley into several beautiful and fertile islets, adorned with all the blooming flowers of spring, with alder-groves waving to the aromatic breeze, and various fruit-trees covered with blossomings

of the richest tints. Amid these little islands of eternal green are several neat cottages, whose white fronts, half-embowered with woodbine and myrtle, peep out between the trees with which they are surrounded in the most rural and picturesque manner imaginable. Another Lubin and Rosetta may here be seen tending their flocks beneath the shade of spreading oaks, and the mellow pipe of the swain is heard from rock to rock. The thrush warbles his melodious responses to the evening hymn of the shepherdess; and amid the hawthorn and honeysuckle bowers of this lovely dale, the nightingale lingers to pour her latest farewell to rosy summer.

Shut out from the busy, the gay, the licentious, the deceitful world, what a pleasing tranquillity the objects of this romantic spot inspire! forcibly reminding me of the following sweetly simple description of old Isaac Walton's:—"When I last sat on this primrose bank and looked down these meadows, I thought of them as Charles the Emperor did of the city of Florence, 'that they were too pleasant to be looked on, but only on holidays.'" The Arcadia of the ancients seems realized in this lowly retreat, and the beauties of pastoral poetry are no longer a visionary romance.

"There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet,
Oh, the last rays of feeling and life must depart,
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart."

But if the soft features of this peaceful scene delight the eye of the pensive and intelligent traveller, how does its neighbouring Valley of Stones strike him with astonishment? Imagine yourself, my dear friend, in a deep glen, surrounded by stupendous cliffs, rugged, barren, and desolate, as if the mountains had been divided and torn to pieces by some horrible convulsion of nature; while the whole area of the valley is covered with rocks and crumbling crags of every form and dimension. At the lower extremity appears a cliff, or isolated rock, closing up with its base more than half the opening to the sea; like some vast but mouldering pyramid, it sublimely lifts its pointed summit amid the fleeting clouds, a resting place for the ocean cormorant, and the eyrie of the fierce blood-hawk. But the effect of this wondrous assemblage of stones is greatly heightened when the silence of night sits brooding over the scene, and the full moon walks forth from her cloudy chambers of the south in all her glory. Then a thousand fantastic shapes appear on every side;

hoary fabrics gray with age and sinking into ruins, falling towers, with turret piled on turret, and human-like forms of gigantic stature stand before you, casting their dark shadows on the shivered fragments beneath. The wreck of a city, destroyed by the terrible visitation of an earthquake, seems spread out before you: or rather, you may imagine yourself transported to the halls of Ishmonie, that fabled city of upper Egypt; where, it is said, the petrified forms of men and women are to this day seen standing amid their desolated streets and the uninhabited chambers of their sand-choked palaces, where the roar of the wild beast of the desert and the frightful hisses of the venomous serpent scare far away the adventurous traveller of the east.

To-morrow I expect to be at my journey's end, and soon you shall hear from me again; till then, dear Frank, adieu!

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXXIV.

Ilfracombe.

My Dear Francis,

This small town possesses nothing interesting to the traveller or antiquarian. It is a retired watering-place, and some respectable families are residing here for a short season. We opened the theatre, which is also the town-hall, a fortnight ago. I am endeavouring to get forward in my present profession, but cannot boast of my progress. I am as yet a novice, and all the characters I attempt are new; I have constantly two or three long parts to study every week, so that it is toil enough for me to acquire the words. I am not the only tyro in this company, and very curious things are sometimes spoken by some of us, to the no small amusement of the enlightened part of the audience.

A Miss Seymer the other night playing the Countess in *The Stranger*, when Mrs. Haller inquired if she had never heard of the Countess Walburg, instead of giving the author's words, "I have heard of such a wretch at a neighbour-

ing court; she left her husband, and fled with a villain,"—replied "I think I have heard of such a wretch at a *neighbour's house;* she left her husband, and *ran away with a blackguard.*" The same actress in the part of Agatha Friburg, when Anhalt told her he had been in search of her, exclaimed, "I know who has employed you, know who has sent this purse. 'Tis Baron *Wilderness,*—[Wildenham,]—but tell him my honour never yet was *put up to auction,*" instead of "never yet was saleable." And in the scene with Frederick, her son, she said of the Baron, "He was in my eyes a *progeny,*" for "prodigy." Mrs. Young vociferating in the part of Angela, in *The Castle Spectre* on Monday night, for "Percy, the pride of our English youths, waits for me at the Conway's side,"—exclaimed, "Percy, the *prince of goodfellows,* waits for me at the *Conder's* side."

There are numerous theatrical anecdotes extant; but the two following are new to you, and, I believe, quite original. During the visits of their Majesties to Weymouth, a company of performers were in attendance, and dramatic representations frequent. A royal order was one day issued that Quick, the comedian, and a Mrs. Keys (who was old and decrepid, and performed

nothing but elderly comic female characters,) should play Romeo and Juliet. Previously, however, the Princess Elizabeth, who was an excellent mimic, read the love-scenes to the King, and represented so inimitably well the manner in which she supposed Quick and the old woman would act their parts, that his Majesty laughed so immoderately, as to make those about him consider it dangerous for him to witness the tragedy so egregiously burlesqued: the order was consequently revoked.

Mrs. Wells was playing at the same theatre; during her engagement, Mrs. Siddons, by royal command, came down to Weymouth to perform for a few nights, and played several characters in comedy. This excited in Mrs. Wells feelings of extreme jealousy;—a deplorable failing, I find, among almost all the professors of the sock and buskin. Resolved to be revenged on the great tragic actress for adding the wreath of Thalia to her laurelled brows, which Mrs. Wells considered as her own rightful inheritance, she one night went into the boxes when Mrs. Siddons was performing the part of Rosalind in *As you like it*; and in her best *comic* scene sobbed and cried so audibly as to disturb the whole house. Many crowded around her, and became solicitous to

learn the cause of such violent distress; to whose inquiries she replied, "Do you think that I have no tender feelings? Sure none but brutes could sit and see Mrs. Siddons play, without shedding floods of tears!"

But, my dear friend, let me revert to what more nearly concerns myself. You wish me to quit my wanderings and return. Alas! to what purpose would be my return to L——. There I have no society; no books, no means of improvement await me. 'Tis true both the Rev. J. Banister and the Rev. J. R—— of Dorchester have urged me strongly to return. But, ah me! I may wait many months before another situation offers; and you well know how unfortunate I have hitherto been in all my attempts. Nor can I endure the thought of being any longer an idler:—while the illiberality, falsehood, and tyranny I have already experienced, make me dread the thoughts of a new master. I employ almost all my spare moments in reading, writing, or painting; and I enjoy opportunities of borrowing a great variety of books which I could not obtain at home, and from which I derive both amusement and instruction. Besides, and moreover, I wish to see the world; to observe men and manners in the different circles of life.

I am anxious to visit the remotest parts of my native land; to behold its noble cathedrals, venerable remains of castles, monasteries, and Celtic temples; its Roman and British camps, and other scenes, which time and chivalrous deeds of historic fame have consecrated, and rendered most interesting to the lovers of antiquity.* You know I have no other means of gratifying this ardent curiosity of mine, except that of continuing, at least for a time, on the stage. I cannot do as Goldsmith did: he wandered on the continent without profession, money, or friends, except such as the music of his evening flute obtained for him after a long day's journey among the peasantry, to whose charity he was indebted for his supper and lodging. The learned of old, whose names stand high on the records of literature, travelled far and wide to obtain knowledge; and in the third age of learning, at its restoration, among others of lofty fame, let us hear what Erasmus did:—"A great

* I was surprised to find the following words in one of Burns' letters to Mrs. Dunlop, which I never met with till very lately:—"I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued with the routine of business, for which, Heaven knows, I am unfit enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles; to wander on the romantic banks of the rivers; and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honoured abodes of her heroes."

Currie's Edition of Burns' Works.

part of the life of Erasmus was one continual peregrination; ill supplied with the gifts of fortune, and led from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom by the hopes of patrons and preferment,—hopes which always flattered and always deceived him,—he yet found means, by unshaken constancy and a vigilant improvement of those hours, which in the midst of the most restless activity will remain unengaged, to write more than another in the same condition would have hoped to read. Compelled by want to attendance and solicitation, he became so much versed in common life, that he has transmitted to us the most perfect delineation of the manners of the age. He joined to the manners of the world such application to books, that he will stand for ever in the first rank of literary heroes."* *The Praise of Folly*, one of his most celebrated works, was composed on horseback, on his way to Italy. Erasmus shall be my pattern in all things, but meanly sueing to obtain the fickle favour of the lofty and the great. I despise the supercilious opinions of paltry wealth, and think with *The Spectator*, "What are a few lordships, or the so much admired patrimony of those who are styled

* The Rambler.

wealthy? When I measure them with my own little pittance, they swell into proud and bloated dimensions; but when I take the universe for my standard, how scanty is their size, how contemptible their figure! They shrink into pompous nothings."

I have lately been forming the outline of a sacred dramatic poem, on the early part of the history of David: a copy of which I now send you. I have as yet written but a few lines of the dialogue.

ACT I.—SCENE 1.—Opens with thunder and lightning, and discovers a spacious cavern, with several lamps pendant from the arched roof. In the centre, an altar of human skulls with incense burning on it. Supernatural forms of terror appear in the back ground. Wild music is heard, and several witches enter. A chorus of witches. Enter the hag of Endor, with tidings that king Saul is triumphant over the Philistines; and relates the battle and the combat of David with the giant Goliath of Gath. The witches determine to revenge themselves on Saul for his severity to those who practise the arts of divination; perform a sacrifice to Moloc, sing a chorus, and vanish.—SCENE 2. The streets of Gibeah. Enter Merab and Michal, Saul's daughters, with a train of virgins bearing timbrels and harps, and strewing the ground with flowers and garlands. They dance and chant a chorus of triumph. Martial music is heard. A grand procession of soldiers with ensigns, trophies, &c. Enter Saul, David, and Jonathan, crowned with garlands, seated in a splendid chariot; followed by captains, prisoners of war in chains, soldiers bearing the head and arms of the slain giant, and ther spoils taken in battle. The

chorus of triumph repeated. Saul descends with David, whom he introduces to his daughters as the deliverer of their country: proposes as a reward for his valour to give him in marriage his daughter Merab; she refuses him, and Michal discovers the tender passion she entertained for him when a minstrel in her father's court. Merab is attached to Adriel, prince of the tribe of Issachar, who becomes through envy the foe of David. The chorus chant another song of victory.

ACT II.—Saul and Adriel plot to take away the life of David; and Merab is promised to the prince as a reward for murdering him. In the second scene a grand banquet is prepared for the warriors. The evil spirit takes possession of the mind of Saul. David plays on the harp, and sings the song of heroes. He is accused by the king of treason. Jonathan expostulates with his father, but to no effect. Saul attempts to stab David: Michal throws herself between them, is slightly wounded, and borne off by David. A chorus of minstrels closes the scene.

ACT III.—Scene 1.—David discovered musing in his chamber: his soliloquy. Michal enters and informs him that a band of soldiers are at his gates, and that his life is in danger; she goes to a secret passage at the end of the room that leads without the palace, while David draws his sword to guard the door. At that moment the pannel which secures the entrance is withdrawn, the king and Adriel enter from the passage, she shrieks, they extinguish her lamp, drag her in, and instantly close the aperture. David is lost in astonishment at Michal's sudden disappearance. The chamber is mysteriously illuminated; Endor and witches enter to thunder and lightning. Endor offers him her protection and the Hebrew crown, if he will renounce the true God and worship Moloc. He refuses, breathes a fervent prayer, and they vanish. Enter Saul and Adriel from the secret passage; they advance unseen with drawn

swords to slay David: at that moment Naomi, a faithful slave of the princess, enters with a lamp, and screams at the sight of the king and Adriel. David draws his sword to defend himself; they fight; David is overpowered; as they are about to kill him, Jonathan and guards are brought in by Naomi to his rescue. High contention betwixt the king and his son, which favours the escape of David from the palace by means of a silken ladder, brought to him by the princess and Naomi, with which they let him down from the lattice of the tower. Chorus——

[*The remainder of this letter being torn off, the part containing the rest of the plot of this drama is lost. A few pages only were ever written.*]

LETTER XXXV.

Holesworthy.

My Dear Friend,

Quite a hubbub has been raised here, because a young lady of the name of Miss C—— has thought proper to evince a partiality and attachment towards me; and I have, it seems, been seen walking with her more than once. The wildest and most absurd reports are circulated respecting me. The inhabitants suppose me to be any thing and every thing but what I really am; yet all seem to agree that I must have lately eloped from my family, and every day a fresh motive is assigned for my so doing. Nay, it has been even affirmed by many that I am the son of a nobleman run away from school; and persons frequently attend the theatre, not to witness any superior performance of mine,—no, for through stage-fright and want of longer time to study the characters I appear in, that is often poor enough,—but merely to see if they can discover by my appearance whether I really am a young scion of nobility or not,—as if a lord's son must be altogether unlike the son of any other person. Almost every one with whom I converse, takes upon himself to offer his kind advice unsolicited,

which is always made up of what is conceived to be cogent reasons for my speedy return to my afflicted family. In fact, ever since I have been on the boards people have so perversely striven to persuade me into such strange notions respecting my former situation in life, that I sometimes hardly know who I have been or what I now can be; and the aid of a few visionary imaginings would enable me almost to fancy, that I really must be the great person they want to make me believe I am.

I have formed an intimate friendship with a young gentleman here, who is articled to an attorney. He professes great good will towards me. With him, Miss C., and her sister, I spend many most agreeable evenings. Last night we performed the comedy of *John Bull* to a crowded house. Mac Lear is quite at home in Dennis Brulgruddery,—in fact it is the best part he plays; and your friend never fails to gain applause in Tom Shuffleton. The incident of Job Thornberry's lending a little runaway boy ten guineas has been considered by many as highly improbable; but we can easily pardon its unlikelihood, since it produces so interesting a scene between those two characters, where Peregrine, just returned from the eastern climes after twenty

years absence, so warmly entreats Thornberry, who is ruined by the treachery of a pretended friend, to accept of payment of twenty thousand pounds, which he has accumulated by trading on the little sum so generously advanced him when he ran away from his father and embarked at Falmouth for the East Indies.

I have lately met with the translation of a French novel,* from which Colman seems to have borrowed this well-wrought interview. Or if he never saw the work in question, it is another striking proof of different authors in distant countries and times falling into the same train of ideas, and expressing them in very similar terms. I shall copy for your amusement nearly the whole scene from the novel.—

"A hawker came into the court-yard with two horses heavily laden. He inquired for Madame de Ferval, and begged that he might be permitted to speak to her. She at first refused, thinking that he only wanted to dispose of some of his goods: but he earnestly repeating his request, was admitted.

'What do you want with me, friend?' said the lady.

He stutters, his speech fails him, he offers his

* See the Royal Magazine for March, 1765.

purse.—At length, recovering a little, 'Here Madam,' says he, 'here is my purse, which I ought to have brought you before; it contains seven thousand livres.'

'Why is this money brought to me?'

'It is yours, Madam; it belongs to you. It is really yours.'

'Mine?'

'Yes; you know it very well. It is not my fault indeed that you have not had it before.'

'You are certainly mistaken, my friend, I have lost nothing; nothing has been stolen from me; and if this is a restitution——'

'No, no, Madam, you lent it me, yourself. You know—you must remember.'

'I don't understand your meaning. You certainly take me for another person.'

'O Madam, can I possibly mistake Madame de Ferval!' His eyes were brimful of tears, and he continued to offer her the purse in the most earnest manner.

'I cannot receive the money, my friend; it does not belong to me!'

'Ah, Madam, I see you don't recollect me; I see it well. You have forgot little Jacob, that poor orphan who used to carry a little box.'

'Is it possible! Are you the same child?'

'I am, indeed, Madam. That louis d'or, which you lent me eighteen years ago ——'

'What of it?'

'It has made my fortune, Madam. I have worked hard; I have taken a great deal of pains; but I have at last got together some money by means of those four and twenty livres, which were at first my only principal.'

'And pray what may your gains have been.'

'Fourteen thousand livres; for indeed, Madam, I have been very exact. There are seven thousand in the purse. I have always kept my account very carefully; and have always calculated your share of the profit separately.'

'My share of the profit!'

'Yes, to be sure, Madam, for that was our first bargain.'

'What bargain?'

'You have not surely forgot, Madam, that one day after you had examined my little box ——'

'O, now I recollect the little box,' said she, smiling, 'there was not a crown's worth of goods in it, and nothing could be more neatly and cleanly disposed.'

'You asked me how I should be able to get my living at that trade?'

'That question drew tears from you apace; I remember it well.'

'You should also remember, Madam, that I then told you, that for want of money I should never perhaps be able to do any thing.'

'You then explained to me your little scheme of trade, which I thought to be sensible and well planned.'

'You were then kind enough to ask me, Madam, how much money I should want to push myself on in an easy kind of way.'

'I believe you told me twelve livres.—Yes, it was twelve livres: that was a striking circumstance.'

'Alas! how great a sum was twelve livres to me at that time. You gave me a louis d'or, upon condition that you should halve my profit.'

'Wonderful honesty! What, my good friend, did you really imagine ——'

'To be sure I did, Madam; I should have been a dishonest man if I had not made a faithful division. I have brought you my accounts; they are right to a penny!'

The surprise, the astonishment, the joy of Madame de Ferval hindered her from speaking. The hawker unties the purse, empties it on the table, and begins to count the gold.

Madame de Ferval rises and prevents him. 'Keep, my friend, keep your purse; you have gained it too honestly ——'

'Take it, Madam, it is yours; it belongs not to me.'

'Take it back, my good friend. Ah! can there be,' said she, looking at us, 'a more lively pleasure than that which I now experience? How little has it cost me to procure it!'

Tears flowed from us all; but the good man himself was in a situation hardly to be expressed. He cried, he trembled, he could not speak, and continually expressed by signs that the money must be given to Madame de Ferval.

'I was afraid,' he cried out at last, 'I was afraid that you would suspect me of having cheated you, by staying away so long. I came but yesterday into this part of the country; I went directly to your house, Madam, and was informed of your being here.'

'How much it rejoices me to see you return happy and honest, my dear Jacob, (for I do not know you by any other name), God has blessed you, and you deserve it. I thank heaven for having made me instrumental in procuring your good fortune. Continue your trade, and do not fail to acquaint me with your success.'

'But the money, Madam?'

'I have already told you it does not belong to me.'"

So much for the novel, my friend; but it will be instantly perceived, by comparing this scene with that in *John Bull*, how much Colman has improved on the original.

Ilfracombe possessing nothing interesting to the lover of antiquity, I feel anxious to get into Cornwall,—that land of the ancient Britons, when I will again address you. Wishing you every happiness,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXXVI.

Stratton, Cornwall.

DEAR FRANK,

Soon after my arrival here, I made a pilgrimage to Kilkhampton Church, to view those very monuments which were originally the subject of Hervey's pious *Meditations.* I forgot to tell you that when we were at Bideford, I often visited a gentleman who resides in a house which the Rev. James Hervey used to frequent when curate of that place. At such times I was always indulged with the pleasure of sitting in the very arm-chair in which he constantly sat during his friendly visitations. But greater still was the melancholy delight I experienced on viewing those tombs and mournful inscriptions, which first led him into such a train of holy and sublime ideas. A double row of spreading trees cast a sober shade on the pathway that leads to the venerable edifice, where, in a corner of the north aisle, I particularly observed the "garnished sepulchre" of the "entombed" warrior Sir Bevil Granville, who was slain fighting against the rebels in the

famous battle of Stratton. This conflict took place on the 6th of May, 1643, on a hill near this town called Stamford's hill, from its having been the position of the parliamentary general, the Earl of Stamford. In one of the streets of Stratton is erected a plain tablet to commemorate the overthrow of the rebels by Lord George Landsdowne, who led the royal army, supported by Sir Bevil Granville and the brave troops of Cornwall.

Here, then, on this sacred spot, within these ancient walls it was that the celebrated Hervey, whose works I have read so often, and with still increasing delight, first began his *Meditations among the Tombs*. Little did I once think, my dear friend, that I should ever make a pilgrimage to these sepulchral monuments,—that I should visit these self-same mouldering relics of the departed which inspired his heavenly contemplations. Alas, divine Hervey! thou, who didst walk these aisles wrapt in solemn musings on the forgotten dead, art now thyself silent and cold as those who sleep in darkness and moulder in dreamless repose beneath this "lettered floor," where thou beheld'st "the inscriptions to be matter of mourning, lamentation, and wo." But thou, like these, of whom the world has long

forgot to think, of whom all remembrance is cut off by the sithe of Time from the face of the earth, shalt not be forgotten, nor thy memory blotted out from the page of renown. Thou hast raised to thyself a monument from that which crumbleth and is dust, even the ashes of the dead; yet shall it outlive the proud mausoleum of hewn rock, and imperishably endure, despite the wreck of all things mortal, till Time itself expires! The sculptured alabaster of yon renowned warrior's tomb shall decay, and his very name the dissolving finger of Time erase; but thy memorial is eternal, for it dwells, according to thy hope, in the hearts of succeeding generations.* Surviving friends to thy memory bear witness that thou hast not lived for thyself alone, nor been unserviceable to the best interests of thy fellow-creatures; while rolling ages shall echo thy praise as long as the sun and the moon endure.

I continued to linger around Kilkhampton's consecrated fane, till the lengthening shadows of evening reminded me it was time to return. With a mournful reluctance I quitted the quiet spot, where

* See Hervey's Reflections on the Warrior's Tomb.

" Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,"

never, perchance to behold it again; and in my way back to Stratton passed over Stamford's hill. Here a different scene presented itself to my wandering imagination. I now stood on the very spot once covered with warring multitudes, once died red with human blood, and strewed with the mangled carcasses of the slain. What a horrid tragedy has been acted here! where brothers madly slew each other, and sons plunged unrelentingly in their fathers' bosoms the deadly steel! Britons opposed to Britons!

" O, what are these?
Death's ministers, not men, who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousand fold the sin of him who slew
His brother: for of whom such massacre
Make they, but of their brethren,—men of men?"

What clashing of sabres, what roar of musketry, and what thundering peals of cannon rang around this hill of slaughter!

" The beams of morn that rose o'er eastern height,
Danced on the plume of many a gallant knight;
The ray that lingered on the ocean wave,
Kissed the red turf of many a soldier's grave!"

Here the warlike Stamford, though in a bad,—an infamous cause,

> "Assumed the port of Mars, and at his heels,
> Leashed in like hounds, did famine, sword, and fire
> Crouch for employment."

But the noble and loyal Landsdowne, amid his brave troops of ancient British blood,

> "With high uplifted hand,
> Shook the bright gleamy terrors of his brand,
> Glanced proudly on the embattled host below,
> And mocked the menace of a rebel foe."

Yet, alas! in the rush and press of bleeding conflict fell the gallant Granville, fighting for his king, his religion, and his country! But he fell in the hour of triumph, and victory bore him to his grave on her sun-bright shield. Enviable fate! thou sleepest on the purple bed of honour; while glory, with never-dying ray, gilds the laurels that bloom around thy bannered sepulchre.

> "O, if my voice can pierce the gloom,
> And rouse the silent slumberers of the tomb;
> O'er thy cold dust the muse shall pour her strain,
> To tell thee that thou didst not fall in vain."

The war-horse, that ploughed up this flowery

turf with fetlocks died in blood, as onward he rushed to the furious charge, sleeps with his stern rider in peace. The grave of warriors is beneath my feet, where the fellest foes quietly slumber by each others side, regardless of all party animosity, and forgetful of their late mortal strife. The voice of the trumpet is heard no more in these tranquil regions; the roar of the thundering death-gun peals no longer on the evening breeze. The fearful clash of bayonet closing with bayonet: the yell, the shout, the groan, the din of battle, all are past away, like the raging of the infuriate ocean when the tempest expires at morn; while not a wreck remains to tell the bloody tale of havock and death!

Yours as ever,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXXVII.

Liskeard, Cornwall.

DEAR FRANK,

You will perceive by this letter, that I have not yet quitted the western peninsula. There is a charm about it that makes me love to visit its

"Wreck-devoted shores,
Its barren hills, and russet moors;
Where languid verdure tints the vales,
And sigh thro' chasms the summer gales:
And the eye wanders o'er a scene,
By lawn, nor grove, nor dingle green,
Till in some little meadow close,
With vagrance tired it seeks repose."

A language called Cornu-British, different to that used in other parts of England, has been preserved here almost to the present age, and was generally spoken down to the time of Henry VIII. It is said to have been a dialect of the Amorican and related to the Welch, but much more musical. I am told it was constantly spoken by the fishermen in the remotest parts of the county in 1720; and did not cease to be

used in common conversation till so late as about 1758. But the last sounds of this ancient vernacular tongue expired with a fishwoman of Mousehole, called Dolly Pentreath; by which circumstance she has acquired a sort of immortality. On her grave-stone there either is, or was, the following doggrel epitaph in Cornish and English.

Coth Doll Pentreath, canz ha deaw,
Marir en badans een Powl plew;
Na en an Eglar, ganna Poble braz,
Bet en Eglar-Hay Coth Dolly es!

Old Doll Pentreath, one hundred age and two,
Both born and in Paul parish buried too;
Not in the church, 'mongst people great and high,
But in the churchyard doth old Dolly lie!

There are, I understand, several Cornish MSS. still extant: two of which, containing some interludes, are in the Bodleian Library,—one written on parchment in the fifteenth century, the other on paper by W. Jordan in 1611. There is a poem, also, called *Mount Calvary*, in that language. But of the author's name, and age in which he lived, I am ignorant.

To this corner of the west, when Ynys Prydian, or the isle of Britain, left defenceless by the

Romans, was deluged with invading hordes of Saxons, many of the Britons retired for refuge. Here a succession of Celtic princes for ages nobly held a free dominion. It was at the castle of Tintagell, on the northern shores of this county, that Arthur, the prince of chivalry, the [illegible] of legendary song, and the glory of the Britons was born; and Edward the Black Prince, the pride of England, the conqueror of France, who led the Gallic king a captive in triumphal procession through the streets of London, was the first Saxon duke of these ancient Weales, or sons of the west. Though this land of Cornubia,—the name applied to it by the Romans when their empire was extended from the southern ocean to the most distant shores of Scotland,*—appears for the most part to those who travel by the common roads, dreary, wild, and uninviting; though rugged and barren mountains, with bleak and desolate moorlands run through the midst of its whole length, yet is it to the lover of nature and antiquity highly interesting. Its lofty tors, whose proud heads are a resting-place for the wandering cloud and the tempest, its dark-brown

* "Richard de Cirencester plainly demonstrates, that all Scotland, as far as Inverness, was ultimately conquered by the Romans, and made a province under the name of Vespasiana, many cities, stations, and roads of which he gives the particular iters." *Dr. Stukeley.*

craggy rocks and heathy wastes, where solitude dwells enshrined in mists and storms, are crowned with monumental piles of its earliest heroes, with the mountain sepulchres of its ancient kings and warriors; and eternal vestiges of the druidical superstition and blood-stained rites of its primitive possessors, are still visible in the numerous barrows, cromlechs, cairns, circles, temples, rock-basons, and logan stones with which it abounds: while it lays claim, from the many coins, pavements, urns, and tombs lately found in different parts, no less to the venerable remains of Roman, than of Celtic antiquities.

The fisheries and mines of Cornwall constitute its chief wealth; but the scenery in the neighbourhood of the mines is miserably cheerless and barren. Nor grove nor verdant mead empurpled with flowers, can the weary eye find to repose on; but immense heaps of naked ore and rubbish cover the whole face of the earth on every side. But great is their antiquity; for that they were known to the Phœnicians is, I think, certain. All authors agree in considering the Scilly islands to have been the Cassiterides of the ancients; and Solinus says that a turbid sea divided the Scilly isle (Siluram) from Britain. The distance is not more than forty miles, and—

to use the words of a modern author,—"if we once presume that the Phœnicians reached the Scilly islands and extracted tin from them, we shall do great injustice to their memory to suppose that they, who could sail from Tyre to the Scilly islands, would not have adventured the small sea between them and the Land's End." But I am informed, from good authority here, that the traditions of ages, which I assure you are still faithfully preserved among these sons of the Cymry, represent the whole group of the Scilly islands to have been formerly connected with the main peninsula by a neck of land called the Lioness, which was swept entirely away by tempests and other terrible convulsions of nature.* If this be true, and they say there still exist some appearances to confirm the belief, it renders still more certain their acquaintance with the Cornubian mines. After the Phœnicians, who were subdued by the conquerors of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, their descendants, the Carthaginians, succeeded to their territorial possessions, extended their power in Spain, and continued their commercial intercourse with the

* Sir Walter Raleigh in his *History of the World*, speaking of the parting of the island of Sicily from the Italian continent, affirms the same of "Scillie here in England from the cape of Cornwall."

British isles; nor did the Romans, after their conquests in this country, neglect works of such high importance as the mines of Cornubia.

Yesterday, I went from hence to visit the antiquities in the neighbourhood of St. Cleer, about three miles to the northward of this town. The church of St. Cleer is a handsome building and of spacious dimensions, consisting of a nave and two aisles, which are divided from the nave by four grand arches, supported by elegant pillars whose capitals are richly adorned with sculpture. The tower is lofty, and surmounted by four gothic pinnacles, which with the buttresses are finely ornamented. But objects of far greater antiquity claimed my attention and examination, and I continued my pilgrimage to the famed well of St. Cleer.

Thou once-sanative fountain, pure as the cloudless canopy of heaven which thou dost now reflect so brightly, and flowing as translucent as when thy saint first blest thee, where are all thy wonderful powers of healing fled? The time has been when four walls of hewn stone encompassed thee about, and an ornamented dome of gothic fretwork on sculptured pillars rose loftily o'er thy sacred waters: then were thy gates, like those of Bethsaida's angel-troubled pool,

thronged with pilgrims flocking from distant lands, with crowds of valetudinarians and emaciated cripples, who pressed around thy marble brim to taste thy panacean wave, or bathe in thy limpid streams, and be healed. But thou art now lonely and unfrequented; thy pillars are removed, and thy walls become a heap of ruins, over whose nakedness nature, as if in pity, has flung a verdant mantle of ivy. The shadow of thy renown, like a dim ghost, still hovers about thee; but those miraculous powers of restoring the sick with which the dim-eyed Genius of Superstition endowed thee, are now lost and unknown, like those crowds with all their hopes and fears, their cares and diseases, that in days of yore thronged thy sainted portal.

Not far from this once-celebrated spring, are vestiges of a still remoter period,—even the monuments of the days of druidism. These consist of three circles of upright stones, from three to five feet in height. Several of these rude pillars, I am sorry to say, through avarice and ignorance have been lately carried away; but it is easy still to perceive that the centres of the circles were in a direct line. The peasantry believe these stones were once men, and thus metamorphosed for hurling (that is, playing

in circles with a ball) on the Sunday. These venerable but rude relics of other days and years gone by, are therefore known by the name of the Hurlers. But they were not, as many suppose, Celtic temples erected for the rites of the Druidical religion: no, my dear friend, on this spot I feel confident once stood the Maeny y Campiau, or Stone of the Games, and that these rock pillars formed the cirques of the British, erected for the exhibition of their ancient sports; where, as was the custom in the earliest ages, the chiefs stood each by his pillar to witness and applaud the manly exercises of the brave and the athletic; and where the Eisteddfods, or Sessions for deciding the merits of rival performers in the Celtic Olympics, were originally held.

Dr. Davis informs us, in his Dictionary, that there were twenty-four British games: and Pennant says "that ten of these were called Gwrolgampau, or manly games. Of these, six depended on bodily strength, and were styled Tadogion, that is, father games; because no instrument whatsoever was necessary to perform them, for they depended on the man naked as he was born. The Greeks had their Pentathlum. We had one more: 1. strength to raise weights; 2. running; 3. leaping; 4. swimming; 5. wrest-

ling; 6. riding. I imagine that the word Marchogaeth extends further than the common acceptation, and that the game intended was a contest between charioteers; for no people were more skilled in the use of chariots in war than the Britons: it is therefore improbable that they would not in time of peace exert their art in mimic combats, or competitions of speed in the festive fields. The remaining four manly games were O Rymarfau, or what depended on skill in arms. 1. Archery; 2. playing with the sword and buckler; 3. playing with the Cleddyf Deuddwn, or the two-handed sword,—the ancient weapon of the Britons, as exemplified in a statue of a soldier found in digging among the ruins of London after the great fire, 1666;—4. Chwarau Ffon Ddwybig, or playing with the two-ended staff; which seems to correspond with the more modern quarter-staff. After these were the ten Mabolgampau, or Juvenal games. Among them were species of the chase. 1. Coursing with the greyhound; 2. fishing; 3. fowling. The remaining seven were of the domestic kind: 1. Bairdoniath, or poetical composition; 2. playing on the harp; 3. reading; 4. singing a Cywydd with music; 5. singing a Cywydd between four, with accents; 6. drawing of coats of arms; 7.

heraldry. These two seem so congenial as to be unnecessarily separated." I have sent you this long quotation, as I consider the information it conveys respecting the amusements of the aborigines of this island and their descendants to be highly interesting.

Ye fragments of other ages, barbarous and warlike; ye pillars of antiquity, that have so long withstood unmoved the revolutions of times and seasons, and all the tempests and convulsions that nature is heir to, while generation on generation hath past away into utter oblivion, and their proudest monuments of art, the accumulated labour of years, that promised fair to be eternal, mouldered like their builders into dust,—while I lean against your storm-worn and rugged sides, wrapt in deep musings, the scenes of savage festivity that have been here witnessed in the days of old, pass in bright visions before me. There sits on his seat of stone in the midst of the circle, the Celtic king with his diadem of ocean pearls, and his broad torque of purest gold. Around him stand the princes and elders of his people, with the arch-druid and his sacrificing priests and bards, having harps in their hands and clad in their azure and parti-coloured robes: their nobly born pupils pass before the king, as candidates for the oaken

garland of merit in all the vigorous exercises of sport and chivalry.

The games are begun. I see the denuded wrestlers straining their brawny arms about each other, while

"To the grasp each manly body bends,
The humid sweat from every pore descends;
Their bones resound with blows,—sides, shoulders, thighs,
Swell to each gripe, and bloody tumours rise."

Here the gigantic warrior lifts the weighty stone, and hurls it through the air; and there the youthful heroes, stately as the pine and lovely as the young myrtle-tree, contend

"The palm of swiftness to obtain."

See, on the plain beyond that barrow, on which is set up the Stone of Remembrance,

"Some tomb perhaps of old the dead to grace,"

the chariots stand ready at the barrier, as if in battle-array. How the fiery steeds champ the bit, and plough the flowery turf with their shining hoofs, impatient to try their speed and rush in thunder towards the goal. Their charioteers are the sons of princes, and the offspring of renowned chiefs: they burn with desire to exert their skill, and pant to obtain the meed of

victory,—the envied prize of their warlike vocation.

"At once the coursers from the barrier bound;
The lifted scourges all at once resound;
Their heart, their eyes, their voice, they send before,
And rip the champaign thunder from the shore:
Thick, where they drive, the dusty clouds arise,
And the last courser in the whirlwind flies;
The smoking chariots, rapid as they bound,
Now seem to touch the sky, and now the ground;
While hot for fame, and conquest all their care,
Each o'er his flying courser hung in air,
Erect with ardour, poised upon the rein,
They pant, they stretch, they shout along the plain."

The son of Cardinha, the chief of Carhaugives, puts all his competitors at a distance, and becomes the envied victor. The aged father lifts his voice exultingly in joy. The youth is led towards the king, who binds around his brows the oaken wreath of renown, and places in his hand the golden prize of valour. The multitude raise the loud shout of congratulation, that rolls in thunder from the mountain logan to the cromlech on the heights of Trethevy.

Who are those within the further circus that lift against each other the Cleddyf Deuddwn, or two-handed sword of death? How the fire streams from the clashing steel! The chief of

Tentagell and the young prince of the heroic line of Tregomer are met in mimic warfare, to try the strength of their arms in combat, and their skill in the use of the dreadful brand of slaughter.—But I soon turned from this scene of furious strife to objects far more pleasing: I looked forward and saw in the centre circle, standing before the king, his chiefs, and the arch-druid, a company of youthful bards. The signal was given, and methought the British minstrels struck their harps in unison so divinely sweet, as ravished my soul with exquisite delight. Then each one singly swept the sounding strings of his lyre, and sung a wild tale of love and chivalry. A bard arose fair and blooming as the morn of summer; his long and amber locks streamed like a golden banner on the winds; o'er his cheek spread the glow of enthusiastic imagination, rich as the evening's sunset sky; and from his dark blue eyes darted the rays of genius, like the early sunbeams through the sapphire clouds of the east. He bowed before the king, and thus awoke his stringed instrument of magic tones.

[*This song of the Bard, in imitation of Ossian, was written in another letter, which being handed to different friends, eventually was irrecoverably lost.*]

The bard ended; and as the king was about to adorn him with a chaplet of oak interwoven with flowers, I was aroused from my reverie by the companion of my pilgrimage, when the scenes I had been contemplating vanished from before me as a dream of the night, and all around was dreariness and solitude.

I then hastened on to visit the neighbouring hill, on which are eight rocks heaped on each other to the height of thirty-three feet. This pile is in the form of an inverted cone. The top stone was once a logan, or rocking stone; but its equipoise is now destroyed through a part of it having been broken off. These immense moveable rocks, it is said, were made use of by the druids to prove the guilt or innocence of persons accused of crimes. Their mysterious equipoise was kept by those artful priests a profound secret from all but themselves; and they pretended that the power of moving them was a certain test of innocence. The seeming impossibility of moving such prodigious masses without the intervention of a miracle in favour of innocence, frequently, no doubt, induced those who were conscious of their guilt to decline this Celtic ordeal, and to confess the crimes of which they were suspected. This hill is covered with vast

blocks of granite, of strange and mystic shapes, connected with the druidical mythology; and in the centre of the logan is a large bason, or hollow, which I conceive was made use of either to hold the holy-water which these priests made use of for their various lustrations, or the blood of those victims which they offered up in sacrifice. Homer gives us a clear account of the latter superstition, in those solemn rites performed by Ulysses on his descent into the infernal regions.

Not far from hence, on another eminence, is a large cromlech, or altar, formed of a single slab of granite sixteen feet in length and ten in breadth, supported by six upright stones or pillars. In the upper end of the altar is a small circular hole, through which the cords that bound the unhappy captive, destined for the sacrifice, were drawn. Here again I fell into a reverie.

Methought it was May-evening; the wild plover hovered over her nest, amid the purple blossoms of the heath; and the lapwing flew screaming round the mountain of rocks. The sun was set, dimness veiled the hill, the white mist floated along the twilight valley, and the voice of the mountain-stream came in music on the wayfaring winds. Suddenly, through the still-

ness of the hour was heard the wailing of death and the heart-sickening groans of despair. I turned, and beheld amid the light clouds, whose fleecy skirts swept the blood-stained cromlech of the hills, a human-like figure, but of frightful and gigantic dimensions. It seemed to lift its horrid head into the sky, and its broad arms extended themselves like the limbs of the huge oak; while, methought, from its bosom issued those dismal groans which broke fearfully the sweet silence of evening. I drew near, and perceived that the appalling shape which stood beside the cromlech was the wicker image of an immense giant, whose hollow parts were filled with human beings destined to be burnt in sacrifice to Beal.* As I stood listening to their lamentations, the sacred flame upgushed from the logan on the hill, and threw a ruddy light on the vast and stony shapes of the mountain. A shout like the voice of many waters, seemed to spread through all the land; and fires were seen ascending into the illumined sky from tor to tor, far as the powers of vision could extend.

"Another fire rose furious up behind
Another and another: all the hills,

* Beal or Bealan, the Celtic name of the sun.

Each behind each, held up its crest of flame.
Along the heavens the bright and crimson hue,
Widening and deepening, travelled on: the range
O'er leaps black Tamer, by whose ebon tide
Cornwall is bounded; and on Heytor rock,
Above the stony moorish source of Dart,
It waves a sanguine standard. Haldon burns,
* * * * * *
And all the southern rocks; the moorland downs
In those portentous characters of flame
Discourse, and bear the glaring legend on.
* * * * * *
Northward it breaks upon the Quantock ridge,
It reddens on the Mendip forests dark,
It looks into the caverned Cheddar cliffs,
The boatman on the Severn's mouth awakes
And sees, the waters rippling round his keel
In spots and streaks of purple light,—each shore
Ablaze with all its answering hills.
* * * * * *
The bard in Mona's secret groves beholds
A glitter on his harp strings, and looks out
Upon the kindling cliffs of Penmanmawr."

With the deafening shout of unnumbered multitudes, rose the wild music of a thousand harps and shrill trumpets from the crowd of bards that surrounded the wicker image of sacrifice; but they could not drown the dreadful shrieks and

wailings of the victims it contained: for now I beheld the druids set fire to the vast piles of wood which were heaped around the image, and it was soon enveloped in a pillar of smoke, from whence darted forth the red flames of death, till the mountain seemed another Stromboli or Etna casting forth its burning entrails on the air. To the sound of many harps, the half-naked and furious multitude danced in mysterious circles round the mis-shapen rocks; and as they moved to and fro, now involved in deep shadows and now clearly seen in the red glare of the terrible flames, they seemed an assembly of hideous demons; while the shout of savage and frantic priests, the crackling and roar of the death-blaze as it mounted aloft amid the darkness of heaven, mingled with the shrieks and wailings of anguish, gave a frightful and tremendous picture of the infernal regions of endless pain and desolation!

Here my companion again roused me from my vision, and I found myself by the Pillar of Remembrance, set up to commemorate the death of Dungerth, king of Cornwall, who was drowned in the year 872. It stands near a tumulus on which was another great stone, that

has lately by modern Goths been thrown down, in the mistaken and ridiculous hope of finding treasures beneath it. Thus having viewed all the antiquities of St. Cleer, I returned to Liskeard.

Hoping soon to hear from you, I close this epistle by subscribing myself

Yours, most sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Exeter.

DEAR FRANK,

I HAVE left Mac Lear's company, and taken my leave of Cornwall to join another manager of the name of Vincent; who offered me, by letter, an advance of salary, and better parts to play. I expected to have found him at Chard, in Somersetshire; but on my arrival here, I learnt he had opened the campaign at Newton Bushel, in Devonshire, sixteen miles from Exeter, for which place I shall set off to-morrow morning. In the meantime I will give you some little account of this ancient city.

Exeter is the Caer Ruth of the old Britons, and (according to Antoninus' Itinerary) the Isca Dumnoniorum of the Romans. It is pleasantly situated on the eastern banks of the Exe, or Isca, which is navigable for small vessels quite up to the city. It was either enlarged and beautified, or built entirely by the Romans. But most probably it was originally one of the low-land towns or fortifications of the aboriginal

Britons, which consisted for the most part of huts or booths of a circular form, and constructed of poles and wattled work on low foundations of earth or loose stones, and covered with reeds which were united to a point on the top. Diodorus Siculus, speaking of the habitations of the Britons, tells us, "They have very poor wretched dwellings, composed for the most part of reeds and wood." Yet these lowland clusters of huts or bods, fenced round with ramparts of earth or trees hewn down, were the humble originals of many great cities in the times of the Romans and the Saxons, and even in the present day. The castle of Rugemont, part of which still remains, is said by Grafton to be the work of Julius Cæsar; and Dr. Stukeley considers one arch of the south gate of the city to be of Roman masonry, and that its present walls were built on the foundations of those laid by that people.

After the first settlement of the various hordes of Anglo-Saxons in Britain, this city was for a long time the residence of the kings of West Britain; for so was Cornwall, Devon, and part of Somerset long denominated by the Saxon invaders. Several ancient gates, and part of the walls with their lunets and towers, that have withstood so many sieges of the Saxons, the

Cornubii, and the blood-thirsty Danes, are still standing in all their pristine strength. They originally took in a very considerable compass of ground in the form of a parallelogram, three thousand Roman feet in length and two thousand in breadth; but the modern city has swelled far beyond its ancient limits on every side. I have seen a plate of it taken about a century ago, at which time there were many houses and a church standing on the bridge over the Exe; not one vestige of this now remains,—a new and handsome bridge with stone balustrades having been built in the place of the old one. The high-street is of great length, spacious, and commodious, and crowded with handsome shops. Many of the houses being of a very old model give an appearance of antiquity, though not of inelegance to that part of the city. The population of Exeter is said to be about eighteen thousand. It contains nineteen churches, besides the cathedral, and is 176 miles from London. In the north eastern angle of the city, stand the remains of the venerable castle or palace of Rugemont. It is partly surrounded by a high wall and deep ditch, and there is a rampart of earth thrown up within, equal in height to the top of the wall, making a terrace-walk that overlooked the city and neigh-

bouring country; but the prospects it once yielded are now intercepted by lofty trees, which form a pleasant and shady grove beyond the outer vallum.

Dr. Holland supposes this to have been a Roman fortification; and perhaps it was their prœtorium and chief garrison in this part of the country. Here once dwelt the kings of the West Britons, who long made a vigorous resistance to the encroachments of the invading Saxon. From these towers have floated the sacred banners of the renowned Arthur; and from those gates issued his knights of chivalry, on their fiery steeds of battle, to wage war with the regal chiefs of the Cerdic line. Here dwelt some of the West Saxon Kings, after the expulsion of the Britons from this side the flowery banks of the Tamar; and many of the Saxon Earls of Cornwall, after the subjugation of that distant province, made this palace their residence. Hither to this remote fortress fled the widow and mother of Harold, King of England, after the fatal battle of Hastings; and here did they long receive from the oppressed English, that homage and tender respect which is peculiarly due to royalty in distress. This city had its dukes; for Richard II. created John Holland, Earl of Huntingtor, (his brother

by his mother's side) first Duke of Exeter. Henry IV. deprived him of this honour. Afterwards Henry V. conferred the title on Thomas Beauford, Earl of Dorset, descended from the house of Lancaster. He dying without issue, John Holland, son of the first Duke, was restored by the favour of Henry VI. to all his father's honours: he left the same to his son Henry, who, whilst the Lancastrians prevailed, enjoyed his rights and privileges; but afterwards, when the house of York obtained the crown, he was reduced to such a state of wretchedness, that Philip de Comines affirms "he saw him, who had married the sister of Edward the Fourth, begging his bread, ragged and barefooted, from door to door in the Low Countries." Such are the sad vicissitudes that power and greatness are often subjected to in this world!

The cathedral of Exeter is a grand and imposing pile of gothic architecture, and there is a peculiar elegance and beautiful uniformity preserved, though the work of many succeeding bishops, throughout the noble structure. Some have asserted this temple was founded by Athelstan, in the year 932: but Dr. Stukeley declares Leofricus, a Briton, was the founder and first bishop here, and chaplain to King Edward the

Confessor, anno 1046. "He gave his lands at Bampton, in Oxfordshire, to the cathedral, and has a monument in the southern transept." But this must have been the church of the convent, which the new chapter occupied on their removal from Crediton to Exeter by the Confessor, and which could not have been very large, the convent having been only thirty years before destroyed by fire. The chapel of St. Mary, nearly in its present state, was in all probability the original Saxon cathedral. Warlewast, who succeeded to the see in the year 1107, is considered as the founder of the present stately cathedral. He began the choir in the thirteenth year of Henry I.; and in the time of Henry III., Bishop Quivel built the body of the church. Bishop Grandison lengthened it by two arches, and is buried in a little chapel at the west end. Bishop Lacy began the chapter-house,—Bishop Bevil finished it. Bishop Courtenay built the north tower, or perhaps only repaired it, and gave the immense Peter-bell which hangs in it, weighing 12,500 lbs. In the south tower is the largest peal of ten bells in England.

The sun was declining as I entered this immense temple, the western front of which is richly adorned with statues, though many of

them are sadly mutilated by the all-destroying hand of Time. The vivid rays of the departing orb of day darted through a most magnificently painted window, which shone with all the colouring and brilliancy of eastern gems; its rainbow tints fell on the cold monuments of the dead, and spread over them, as if in mockery, a covering of the richest mosaic. The sublime arches, flung from pillar to pillar, seemed to expand over an etherial cloud of gold, radiant as that which hung in fragrance above the mercy-seat of old, and translucent as the zodiacal column of light that harbingers the rising, and waits in luminous attendance on the setting king of day. As I advanced into the choir, the eastern window struck me for the grandeur of its design, the antiquity of its figures, and the lustre of its varied hues, shedding a dim "religious light" on the high altar, the gothic stalls, and the magnificent episcopal throne of the bishop. The latter structure is an object of great curiosity as well as beauty. It is composed of an assemblage of spires of dark wainscot oak, erected without either, nail, pin, or screw, the whole being ingeniously dove-tailed together. It was taken down and hid during the usurpation of Cromwell, to preserve it from being destroyed, and erected

again after the restoration in all its former elegance. The clock is also a venerable piece of curiosity, exhibiting the day of the week, the day of the month, and age of the moon. An awful stillness reigned through all the vast cathedral: even the foot-fall of passing verger seemed an intrusion on the deep solemnity,—a solemnity that inspires a sacred and holy feeling, which lifts the soul in sublime meditations to the author of its being, making all earthly pursuits, all worldly pomp and possessions shrink into worthless and sordid trifles. Well might Hervey exclaim, "The adorable Creator around me, and the bones of my fellow-creatures under me! Surely then I have great reason to cry out with the revering Patriarch, 'How dreadful is this place!' Seriousness and devotion become this house for ever. May I never enter it lightly or irreverently, but with a profound awe and godly fear."

As I stood musing at the foot of the altar, I could not but bring to my remembrance those days when the ancient Catholic worship in all its ritual solemnities filled this holy sanctuary with such imposing splendour, such eastern pomp of ornament, and processional magnificence, as could not fail to impress on the ignorant (who

are easily captivated by the senses) a devoted reverence for religious duties, and the deepest awe for the profound mysteries of the Christian faith. Here the sainted images crowned with glittering diadems and wreaths of flowers, shrines blazing with the richest gems of the east, ponderous crucifixes of ivory decked with precious stones, immense candlesticks of fretted silver, chalices of massy gold, splendid mitres, refulgent vestments, and a thousand sacred vessels of the costliest materials and most elaborate workmanship, spread a mysterious glory over the solemn dimness that reigns beneath these lofty arches, like that resplendency which once illumined the Holy of Holies in the most magnificent temple the world ever beheld. Suddenly burst on my musings the majestic and powerful tones of the cathedral-organ, each of whose double-diapason pipes will hold a tun of wine! and whose melodious thunderings were reverberated through all the distant and echoing aisles. O, what sublime sensations, what inexpressible feelings, what enthusiastic devotion does that instrument of mighty sounds, heard in such a place, at such an hour, awaken in the heart of man! Its angelic strains melt me into tears! Now they fill me with delicious melancholy; and now they fire my

bosom with divine rapture! This is indeed the house of God, the gate of paradise; and the music of the realms of blessedness already seems to ring in my ravished ears!

But I must tear myself from hence, and mingle again with the sordid, the unfeeling, and common-place world. As I was about to take my exit from the cathedral, I observed the monument of a bishop who attempted to fast forty days and forty nights, after the example of our Saviour; but who died in the fearful struggle against nature on the thirty-first night. What presumptuous folly; nay, what fanatic suicide! But I was not suffered to depart without viewing another very different object. It was the skeleton of a young female, placed in a small oak case, who was executed for the murder of her illegitimate child. The hand which committed the unnatural deed is perfect and shown with the skeleton, having been preserved in spirits for that purpose. What strange beings has this world produced!

The vastness and solemn grandeur of this Christian fane, led me to compare in my mind the celebrated temples of the ancients with those of more modern times. Before the abolition of paganism, Rome boasted in the zenith of her power that she enclosed within the huge circum-

ference of her walls two thousand temples, of which the headlong zeal of the early Christians spared only seven or eight; but I do not conceive she could ever boast of one temple, which might equal in solemn magnificence and greatness of design these sacred, and falsely called gothic, fabrics of our forefathers. Her Jupiter Capitolinus, the Temple of Peace, and the Pantheon were the only religious buildings of extraordinary dimensions; and the last, which is still standing, is only 144 feet in diameter. Could these equal Westminster Abbey, or the cathedral churches of Winchester, Ely, and Exeter? "Antiquarians," says an unknown author, "tell us, that in the front of the ancient temples there was always a spacious court called the area, where merchants vended the necessaries for sacrifice, offerings, and libations; that there was besides a fountain for purifying the sacrificators and victims: that from the area you passed into the body of the building, named *cella*, where were the altars, gods, &c. This cella consisted of three principal divisions; the *basilica*, answering our nave, the *adytum*, like our sanctuary, and the *tribunal*, where stood the statue of the deity whose name the temple bore. But if this description holds good of the temple of Diana Ephesea, or of

Jupiter Olympus, it cannot of most of the rest. The temple of the Olympian Jove at Athens, we are told, was more than four stadia in circumference; that is, above two thousand four hundred feet: be it so.—But let us make the same distribution of this space as the ancients did, and we shall have a faint idea of its size. In this circle must be included a monument sacred to Saturn and Rhea, a wood, statues without number, and collossuses as enormous as those of Rhodes, all which must reduce Jupiter's temple to the size of an ordinary house."

I cannot but think, my friend, that we entertain a mistaken notion respecting the amplitude of the heathen temples of other ages, from supposing them to be supported by such a vast number of pillars as was the case with many of them; for it appears the ancients paid little regard to the cella, or interior of their temples, but always adorned the exterior of such buildings with a profusion of columns and statues. Mons. le Roi says, that the cella of Jupiter Olympus was but six toises wide, and little more than sixteen in length; to such a narrow compass is reduced an edifice said to be four stadia in circumference.

The temple of Carausius was built, according to Ninnus, who lived within two hundred years

of that monarch's reign, on the banks of the Carron, in Scotland; wherein to celebrate a peace between that Emperor and the Kings of the Scots and Picts was a hypœthrum, and perfectly round, in imitation of the Pantheon at Rome, though of far smaller dimensions. And here, my dear friend, I cannot but lament over the fate of this last noble relic of the ancient Roman worship remaining in Albion. This British Pantheon,—around whose sculptured altar, from whence arose the fragrant smoke of the sacrifice of peace and reconciliation, stood the three warlike sovereigns of this envied isle, swearing before their gods to join in holy league and inviolable concord against all their transmarine foes,—to the dishonour of our country, its stupid, ignorant, brutish, miserly owner razed to its foundations, for the purpose of erecting on the river Carron a mill-dam with the stones, though there was no want of such materials in the neighbourhood. "But the vindictive Carron," to use the words of Dr. Stukeley, "so well frequented by the Romans, washing the ruins hard by of the noble city of Camelon, indignant at the vile demolition of the sacred structure, by a fresh flood carried it all away soon after it was put to that base use,—and thus perished the grandest Roman monument in Britain!"

It must, however, be acknowledged that the temple of Vespasian, at Rome, was of very large dimensions; no less than three hundred and forty feet in length, and two hundred and fifty in breadth: yet this building equalled not the cathedral of Winchester, which is five hundred and forty-five feet in length. But for their majestic appearance the temples of old were, I conceive, indebted in a great measure, to their pillared porticoes, and their broad flights of marble steps, which leading up by an easy ascent to the entrance, detached them from every inferior and ordinary building; while the vast number of statues which crowded the avenues and lofty porches, the variety of rich sculpture and gilding that adorned the front, all conspired to give a sublime grandeur to the whole.

Peace, then, to the shades of those venerable fathers of the Christian church, who spent their treasures to erect and dedicate so noble a pile as this to the worship of the true God! May their ashes rest in undisturbed repose beneath the sacred and sublime roof which they raised! May their hallowed tombs remain inviolate and unprofaned till the last trump, whose dreadful notes shall be heard by the cold slumberers of the grave, rings in lengthened thunder through these trembling aisles; and the archangel, with one

foot on the rolling billows of the affrighted ocean and the other on the quaking earth, shall swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there shall be time no longer! May no vile, canting, barbarian goths in future ages arise to demolish these stately walls, and level you fretted roof to the ground that has echoed so oft to the pealing organ's hymn of praise; but may its majestic pillars stand till time itself shall fall, nor yield to dissolution till the foundations of the earth are removed out of their places, and nature sinks amid the universal conflagration!

Having quitted this magnificent cathedral, I walked around the environs of the city, in and around which once stood a great number of religious houses: many, no doubt, founded and endowed as an atonement for secret deeds of blood, or with the spoils of licensed oppression and legal robbery by those haughty and powerful wretches, who beneath the gore-died banners of war, mowed down whole ranks of innocent victims, and desolated provinces with fire and sword. The country about Exeter is most delightfully fertile, with a pleasing diversity of hill and valley, field and grove; and as I looked back on the red walls and towers of the city, which dimly gleamed through the evening

twilight, I fancied I beheld them again beleaguered with ruthless and savage Danes; that I saw the banner of death, the fatal raven, floating on the weary breeze before their gates, and heard the hoarse shouts of approaching warfare ring in my ears. The watchmen paced the battlements with anxious looks; their spears glanced in the last day-gleam of the west. The river was crowded with the pitchy barks of the northmen, and their tents covered its hoof-ploughed banks. From the pagan camp resounded the loud din of jocund revelry; the sacrificial fires suddenly illumined the neighbouring groves; and the waters of the river, as they hastened by, blushed ruddily to view their horrid orgies. I saw the Danish priests lead from their barks nine captives,—for it was the grand festival of Odin. They were noble in stature, and goodly to look on; their brows were adorned with chaplets of flowers, and behind them came a long train of chieftains and warriors clad in flaming mail, whose rough voices lifted on high the battle-song of Odin till the distant hills returned the roar. The captives were laid on the altars, their bosoms pierced with sharp knives, and the fortunes of war divined from the flowing of their blood! The flames preyed on the victims; and as their bodies consumed to

ashes, the pagan army feasted, and made merry and were intoxicated with flagons of mead. Then rose the chief of the ruffian bands; he urged them to rush onward in battle-array against the Saxon city, and his words inspired the ministers of cruelty with enthusiastic revenge. They snatched their weapons, and moved hastily forward to the work of death. The motion of the host was like the rushing of many waters, that, swelled by wintry rains, burst their narrow bounds and spread destruction in their rapid march. With frantic yells they began the assault. The black blood-raven of the north flaps his wings, and screams for joy: they scale the ramparts like locusts: their engines thunder at the gates: the trenches are filled with the dead and the dying:—blood streams down the wall like rain drops in a wintry tempest! Nor are the Saxons idle to defend their towers. They roll down great stones: they pour melted lead and burning sand on the heads of the assailants, which, penetrating the joints of their armour, madden them with agony. The arbalists pour showers of arrows from every loop-hole, and the scorpidion casts forth its poisoned shafts. The dull ear of night is pierced with the thundering

of the battle-axe on helmet and shield,—with the shouts of the valiant, and the yells of the wounded!

" They all in emulation strive
And form a wedge, and rushing storm the walls.
Ladders at once, and sudden fire appear;
Some to the gates advance, and kill the first
Who obvious stand; some hurl the missive steel
In storms of shafts, and darken all the sky."

Morning dawns on the scene of slaughter. The gates of the city yawn asunder, and the gallant Earl of Devonia rushes forth with his dauntless Saxons, trampling down all before them.

" Nor longer with their walls' defence content,
In daring sallies they the foe prevent "

The magic standard of the Danes is taken: the noble Earl hath hewn down their giant banner-man, and now the fierce raven of the north cowers to the Saxon dragon. The pagans fly on every side; they crowd to their sooty barks; the river flows red with their blood; its waves are choked with the carcasses of the slain! The galleys of the destroyer are on fire: the crackling cordage

burns aloft, and the sails spread sheets of sanguine flame on the winds! The British maidens march out of the city with songs of triumph, and join the valiant warriors to spoil the camp of the foe.

* * * * *

Here imagination left me: I awoke as from a dream, and pondering on the subject of my recent musings, returned to the *White Hart* to supper.

I am, dear Frank,

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XXXIX.

Newton Abbott.

My Dear Friend,

This place contains nothing particularly interesting; but there are most delightful and extensive views from some of the neighbouring hills. I shall now proceed to give you a brief description of the new company I am with at present.

The manager is one of the most illiterate, vulgar beings, that can possibly be met with. He certainly possesses some considerable humour in low comedy; and did he but take the trouble to study his author and leave off gagging, or, as Shakspeare says, would "Speak no more than is set down for him," might pass for an actor, in that line, of some talent. But unfortunately for him, as with many others, he aspires to what nature forbids he should ever attain, and has the presumption to attempt playing Macbeth, Rolla, Alexander, and the whole circle of tragic heroes. With an ill-made, squat figure, the very personification of plebeian vulgarity, his physiognomy is the most perfect caricature of tragedy ever

beheld. He has a long, chapfallen visage, with a low forehead; and his dull orbs have no other expression, when not inflamed with passion, than that of insensibility and ignorance: while, to complete his cast of countenance, this elegant tragedian has a pug nose, which points directly upwards like the bowsprit of a man of war. But to heighten the sublime effect of such an assemblage of features, whenever he performs Rolla or Alexander, he paints the lower part of his canoys face with a kind of blue shining paste; so that these two favourite heroes of his are never represented by him without large blue beards, though the Peruvians are well known to have had no beards at all; nor does it appear quite clear from history, that among the titles of the conqueror of the world he was ever honoured with that of Blue Beard. To all this must be added a provincial pronunciation, wrong emphasis, barbarous accentuation, and totally false readings, proceeding from a horridly guttural monotonous voice, "that croaks," as Sheridan says, "like a frog in a quinsy!"

We have in the company a young man, who has been hawked about the country as a Roscius by his mother and father-in-law. He is not wholly destitute of talent for the stage, but is so

illiterate as to be scarcely able to read, cannot write his own name, and is as ignorant of the origin of the title which has been tacked to his name to gull the simple public, as of the different merits of a Seneca, a Sophocles, a Racine and a Crebillon. His father, a Mr. C. it seems, was formerly a manager in the midland counties, for whose death the mother of our Roscius was so excessively sorrowful, as to be found the very night after her good man's final exit, in the bedroom of the stage-keeper, her present husband, to whom her insupportable sorrows had compelled her to fly for comfort and consolation. This woman having some handsome dresses, notwithstanding she is old, squabby, and excessively ugly, with a nose that rivals the manager's, plays all the tragedy-queens; nor are the starved Jane Shore, the elegant and youthful Violante, or the majestic and commanding Duchess in *The Honey Moon* exceptions to the extensive cast of her characters.

Here is likewise an actor calling himself Mr. Clifford, who was brought up a plumber and glazier. He is always broaching criticisms behind the scenes on the works of our dramatic bards, in which he makes use of such words and phrases as were never heard before on the like

occasion. The incommensurability of his erudition, the nervosity and pomposity of his incomprehensible jargon, and the encomiastic honorificabilitudinity which he bestows on those passages that possess no kind of merit,—nay, in many instances, from their grossness and vulgarity are absolute blemishes,—would really astonish you! Our immortal poet of all time, poor Shakspeare, comes in for a large share of this learned Dr. Putty's commentaries and expositions, but which are absolutely too absurd and contemptible for me to repeat. His wife is rather a fine-looking woman, but so ignorant as to tell Miss Pickle, in *The Spoiled Child*, last night before a crowded audience, that she had been spitting and basting a young peasant. "Peasant! a young peasant!" exclaimed Miss Pickle, "A *pheasant* you mean, I suppose," on which the house burst into a roar of laughter.

The manager sets his company a woful example. He spends his days in sloth and idleness, his nights in riot and drunkenness, and has the credit of being one of the greatest liars in the universe. Notwithstanding all this, the business here is excellent, and we have plays *by particular desire* night after night. To-morrow evening we perform Colman's comedy of *The Poor Gentleman*, by the desire of Col. Bingham

and the officers of the Dorset Militia; but I am grown weary of the profession of the stage, and should be happy, were it possible, to quit it immediately. Yet before I trod the boards, I thought a theatre the very temple of happiness; where the dresses were so splendid, the scenes so beautiful, the music so fascinating, the actresses so enchanting, and the language so divine, as no mortal possessed of the least refinement and taste could possibly resist. Alas! the veil is drawn aside, and I have entered the *sanctorum* of this temple of pleasure, and been initiated in some of its deepest mysteries. And what is the result? Continued toil of study, and disgust a thousand times repeated! I begin to perceive, my friend, that earthly happiness is a fleeting, unsubstantial shadow, and enjoyed only by anticipation. In the actual possession of those desires for which the heart of youth so ardently pants, happiness evaporates in air, and leaves nought behind but the bitter dregs of disappointed hope, lassitude, care, and regret. How true are the following beautiful lines of the poet:—

"The world is all a fleeting show,
For man's illusion given;
The smiles of joy, the tears of wo,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow,—
There's nothing true but Heaven!

And false the light on glory's plume,
As fading hues of even;
And love, and hope, and beauty's bloom
Are blossoms gathered from the tomb—
There's nothing bright but Heaven!

For wanderers of a stormy day,
From wave to wave we're driven;
And fancy's flash, and reason's sway
Serve but to light the troubled way—
There's nothing calm but Heaven!"

I am, my dear friend,

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XL.

Paington.

DEAR FRANK,

WE quitted Newton Abbot nearly three weeks ago for this place, which is a large and populous village, containing the ruins of an ancient palace situated on the pleasant shores of Torbay. On my journey hither, when from the hills I once more caught sight of the English Channel, which rolls its broad waves within the distant promontories that form this vast and celebrated bay, I bethought me of those many dauntless worthies who have rode on its billowy surface, and armed with earthly thunder, struck terror to the hearts of Britain's haughtiest foes in every quarter of the globe. On those waters rode the invincible Drake, who blasted the proud hopes of Spain, and dispersed her vast Armada like chaff before the wintry blast. There floated the banners of William of Orange, when he came hither to seek the island diadem, driving a bigot tyrant from the throne of his ancestors, which he unworthily

filled, into perpetual banishment. How many, with hearts light as the gale that swelled their sails, and bosoms panting to win honour and undying fame in the defence of their native land, have gone forth on that mighty world of waters to seek the foes of Britain: and as they caught a last glimpse of yonder lofty promontory, that stretches far into the undulating deep its banner-crowned rocks, breathed a parting sigh to the land of their birth. Then, as on the deck they beheld the setting sun like a radiant crown of burning gold resting on the loftiest headland of their native isle, came, in the soft sweet visions of the soul, before them the enchanting picture of their distant homes, and the joy-inspiring forms of those they loved dearest; while the ardour of true heroism at the same moment rushed through their veins, and their hearts glowed with the fond hope that they should one day return to the outstretched arms of those tender objects of their passion adorned with the garlands of victory, and honoured with the applause of their admiring country. Alas! how vain the expectances of mortals! They met the foe on distant seas; they fought nobly; and amid the flames of battle, fell! The ocean-billow rolls over them,

and their whitened bones rest amid the unfathomed caverns of the deep! Their names perchance may live awhile in the naval records of a grateful nation and the memory of weeping relatives, but soon the obliterating wing of oblivion sweeps across the frail monuments of their fame, and their names perish in eternal forgetfulness!

Passion-week commenced shortly after our arrival here, and we did not open the theatre until Easter-Monday. In the interim, I employed myself in painting for the manager a new scene, and a cottage. For my labour he has never offered a recompence; but no matter: I gain one thing by it,—improvement, and that is my grand object. The business here is very good, and I have been fortunate enough to secure the notice and favour of several of the principal inhabitants, —particularly of Mr. and Mrs. Metheral, in whose barn we perform.

Things thus passed on pretty smoothly until after the commencement of the benefits, and I began to entertain confident hopes that when my night came I should have had a full house. Mr. Metheral had obtained from — Knight, Esq. a promise that he would bespeak my benefit-play. The manager was informed of this, and he

determined to crush all my expectations. The performers' nights fell to them, as the custom is, by lot; and when my night came he would not let me have it, but fixed my benefit on a certain evening, when he knew Mr. Knight and others of my friends could not attend. I remonstrated against this injustice, but in vain; and resolved rather than suffer it, to give up my benefit. But this imperious and arbitrary manager, knowing I was very young and a novice in the profession, determined to have his own way; and accordingly sent off to Newton for the bills of the day, in which he announced the pieces Mr. Knight had chosen for my benefit, and had even the impudence to affix Mr. Knight's name to the head of the bill. This greatly exasperated my friends, who were made acquainted with his injustice; and when the evening came, not ten people entered the doors of the playhouse. The manager stormed with rage to find himself thus foiled, and no performance took place that evening. At the time he ordered the doors to be closed, I was sitting with Mrs. Metheral in the little parlour; when presently after he unceremoniously bounced into the room, foaming and swearing like a mad-man, seized me by the throat, and

attempted to drag me towards the door. At that moment Mr. Metheral entered, and highly incensed at such an outrage committed beneath his roof on one whom he considered worthy of his countenance and friendship, already most unjustly injured, instantly kicked the manager out of the room, through the passage, and quite into the street. He immediately sneaked off in the greatest astonishment and alarm without attempting one word in his defence, and the next morning sent me my discharge. He might have spared himself this last trouble, for I had determined not to perform again in his company. After this, Mr. and Mrs. Metheral requested, nay insisted, that I should make their house my home, till I could get some other situation.

Since my residence beneath this friendly roof, I have not been neglectful of my studies. I have read much, and written several scenes in a new drama. Were revenge a cherished passion of my nature, ample opportunities have been afforded me for its gratification: but no,—I cannot possibly triumph over a fallen enemy. Such is the influence of Mr. Metheral in this village, and so much has Vincent's unjust conduct towards me been reprobated by its inhabitants, that from the

night of my pretended benefit to the end of the season, the theatre has been so thinly attended as often to be closed on the play-nights without any performance; while many times on my return from an evening walk with my friends, we have seen the manager full dressed for Alexander or Rolla, waiting in vain for an audience at the door of the theatre. The sight of me, thus witnessing his downfal, gave to his countenance, inflamed with resentment and smeared half over with his blue paste, a most strange and ludicrous appearance. One of his best performers, of the name of Harrison, a young man of sober habits and strictly moral conduct, left him soon after my dismissal, having obtained a situation in the Manchester company. A Mr. Goddard and his wife, a most disgraceful pair, who used both to get so drunk that they sometimes rolled about the streets, also left at the same time, and the manager with the rest of his company set off about a fortnight ago to Brixham. Since his arrival there he has sent two or three letters, pressing me strongly to join him again; these epistles I put into Mr. Metheral's hands, and in accordance with his advice, have never given myself the trouble to answer them.

After many plans and consultations for my future course in life, it was determined that I should proceed to Plymouth and offer my services to the captains of the men-of-war lying in that harbour, as an assistant-clerk. Mr. Metheral, having himself been a naval officer, and now comfortably retired on a landed property, being very anxious for me to enter the sea service as the surest road to wealth and preferment, I readily fell into his views. At home I had no hopes; and of the stage and its professors I was heartily tired. Accordingly being provided with what my friends thought necessary for an entire new scene of life, after a melancholy parting with these truly disinterested and generous friends, Mr. and Mrs. Metheral, I mounted a horse of theirs, rode to Newton, and the same day took coach for Plymouth. I was too much occupied with the thoughts of my future destiny to make any observations on my fellow-passengers, or the places through which we passed; but on our approach to the populous town of Plymouth, the thunder of the sunset guns came on the loaded winds, and seemed the first sounds borne to me of another world, strange and wondrous, full of heroic adventure, and where danger hid her terrors in the dazzling beams of honour and

glory,—a world in whose new and surprising scenes I fully expected soon to be an actor.

The day after my arrival at Plymouth, I first waited on the Port-Admiral, offering him my humble services as a clerk in any department of his Majesty's naval establishment. He received me with great politeness, thanked me for the offer of my abilities, "But"—ah, that unfortunate *but* stands like an insurmountable rock eternally in the way of all my hopes—"there is not at present," said he, "any situation vacant to which I could appoint you." Taking my leave of the admiral, I hired a boat and went on board the guardship lying in the harbour. Having never been on board a vessel or seen a man-of-war before, when I mounted the deck of the Salvador del Mundo, I scarcely knew where I was, or the business I came on. The vast proportions of this amazing ship, its infinite number of ropes, the huge sails, the streamers and flags that waving from its giant masts seemed floating in the clouds, the size and number of its cannon that stood in death-dealing ranks on either hand, and the multitude of sailors that crowded the decks and moved aloft amid the complicated rigging of this immense floating castle of war, filled me with speechless astonishment: while the panorama or

seemingly moving picture that surrounded it was not less new or interesting. On one side rose the impregnable fortifications of Plymouth citadel, with its sentinels pacing to and fro on the bastion-circled walls, while their bayonets flashed brightly in the beams of a declining sun: on the other appeared the towns of Stonehouse and Dock with their crowded and busy shores, their embattled forts, and warlike lines. There lay the proud ships of victory, the glory of England, the unconquerable bulwark of liberty, with their streamer-crowned masts piercing the clouds; here innumerable vessels of all descriptions, and shoals of boats and skiffs, covered the bosom of the boiling ocean. At a distance were heard the shouts of sailors, the continued din of various mechanics at their noisy labours in the Dock-yard, —that magazine of destruction and death,— mingled with the martial tones of a full military band, sweetly echoing from shore to shore, and flinging over the waters melodious enchantment. Directly opposite to this warlike scene of eternal bustle, confusion, and noise, lay the lovely and calm retreats of Mount Edgcumbe, in whose shady bowers the summer song of the nightingale is heard, and the rough voice of war becomes softened into solemn music by the airy echoes of

its moss-grown cliffs and caves, and deep embowering woods;—where the martial strains of distant bugle, trump, and pipe are mingled sweetly with the evening love-song of the blackbird, and the hollow murmurs of ocean blend in deep diapason with the wild harmony of the leafy forest.

'From the surprise which these scenes so novel, so grand, so interesting, and so beautiful first threw me into, I however soon recovered; and inquiring for the captain of the ship, was immediately conducted to the first lieutenant. He informed me the captain was on shore, and requested to know my business. I told him my wishes to enter the naval service; when he assured me I could not then be entered on the list of the guardship as an assistant-clerk, but that probably a vacancy might occur ere long, or I might find captains in the port who would be glad of such a person to assist them. I left the San Salvador and repaired again to Plymouth. I afterwards went on board many ships, waited on many captains, but in vain: my old luck followed me, and I had the same ill success wherever I tried! After much toil, great anxiety, and considerable expense, I entered one afternoon a tavern in Dock, perplexed, fatigued,

and wretched. After ordering some refreshment, I chanced to take up a Plymouth newspaper: my situation naturally led me to look over the advertisements, and among them I discovered, to my great joy, one which seemed well to suit my present need. It informed the reader that a schoolmaster at the little town of Hatherleigh, in Devonshire, would be in want of an assistant at the close of the present midsummer vacation; and as I considered myself quite equal to the qualifications the situation demanded, and knew where to obtain the most favourable testimonials of character whenever needed, I determined immediately to bid farewell to Plymouth, and set off in search of the new pedagogue. That night I reached Tavistock, and the day after arrived at Hatherleigh. I found the schoolmaster an intelligent pleasant sort of man, but who had lost both his hands; yet his penmanship, performed by means of small hooks fastened in wood to his arms, was excellent. We seemed to be equally pleased with each other, and it was finally settled that in a fortnight, when the vacation ended, I should come to Hatherleigh and reside in his house as an assistant.

This, my dear friend, was sunshine after a gloomy tempest; happiness succeeding to much

sorrow,—such happiness as only the unfortunate can taste, when providence sweetens with some cordial drop the bitter cup of life. I now resolved to return to Paington, where I knew I should be kindly received and hospitably entertained till the time was elapsed for my removal to Hatherleigh, not forgetting to inform the schoolmaster of my residence. On my way back I had to cross a wild and desolate country, and lost my way among the mountains; at length I reached an obscure village, where, after taking some refreshment of which I stood greatly in need, I obtained a horse and guide to take me within two miles of Ashburton. I reached that place about nine o'clock in the evening; but anxious to get as soon as possible to Paington, I continued my journey on foot to Totness. The night was serene and pleasant, the skies were almost cloudless, and the nightingale cheered me with her music on my way. "The full moon tinged with her silver light" the dark green ivy that clothes the rugged nakedness of the ancient keep of Totness castle, as I entered that town about midnight. The inns were all closed, and the place wrapped in total silence. I therefore pursued my course, and shortly after quitting its vicinity, passed near the picturesque ruins of Berry Castle.

I could not resist the pleasure, though greatly fatigued, of turning aside to visit that interesting pile. Here dwelt the proud lords De Pomeroy, whose Norman ancestor,—the first inhabitant of this once magnificent and almost impregnable fortress,—was rewarded for the aid he gave to the conqueror in his subjugation and oppression of the unhappy Saxons, with fifty-eight baronies. In the court are the remains of a noble palace, begun in 1556 by one of the Seymours, to whom the castle and its domains in time descended, but has never been completed.

What barbarous pomp has been exhibited within these baronial halls! what crowds of feudal retainers waited in the wine-chambers on the lord of the feast! What cruelty has been exercised on the hapless captive immured in the dungeons of this tower-encircled abode of grandeur and tyranny! What arbitrary and partial dispensation of law and perverted justice has been shown to the surrounding slaves and vassals in that hall of judgment! There in kingly state and power sat the haughty and imperious lords of this princely fabric, on whose nod hung the life and death of their miserable serfs and dependants. To the north the castle stands on the brink of a vast precipice, over

which the last of the warlike chiefs of Pomeroy on the taking of this fortress is said to have spurred his fiery charger, who with his maddened rider was dashed to pieces. How oft has this gateway,—once defended by the iron portcullis, the drawbridge and deep moat,—been thronged with armed men marching forth in battle-array with streaming banner,

"And all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!"

while those cliffs and woods rung with the neigh of steeds, the "spirit-stirring" horn of battle, and the shrill notes of the trumpet heralding the warrior's triumph. How oft beneath this lofty arch hath passed the lady of romance, in all her jewelled splendour, on her white palfrey, attended by her menial train; and the gorgeous chieftain clad in his rustred, or double-ringed mail of refulgent steel, and close-barred casque flashing to the sunbeams like a pillar of light, and mounted on his barbed warhorse, eager as his proud rider to rush amid the ensanguined combat: while his bannerman flung rejoicingly on the winds his emblazoned ensign. Oft has the wandering minstrel struck the sounding strings of his mellow harp before this guarded portal-arch at evening

hour, and claimed admittance to chant his tale of love and chivalry amid the illuminated hall at the sumptuous banquet of warrior knights. In yonder chapel where weeds and briars luxuriantly flourish, the priests performed the sacred rites of the ancient church; and the choral strains of the evening hymn have oft awoke the echoes of those sacred walls, and sweetly soothed the sorrows of ill-fated beauty, and calmed the lawless passions of the turbulent and the powerful. The roar of laughter once resounded through the castle at the quaint wit and ribaldry of the privileged fool; and the soft lute of the nobly born damsel hath from those windows flung its witch-notes on the midnight winds, while her fond lover, as he leant with folded arms against some aged oak in those venerable woods, listened enraptured to the dying strain.

But what a lovely picture of stillness and repose presents itself now to my view! The moonlight sweetly flings a silvery mantle over the rugged walls of this mouldering edifice, and streams through the broken windows of its dilapidated towers: the dark green masses of foliage with which the surrounding groves and woods are crowned, appear richly tinged with the lunar rays, while they spread over the distant

hills a shadowy tint of lovely gray. The minstrel of night is sweetly singing among the trees that grow near the outer portal, and the beautiful Spirit of Romance sits with upturned eye amid the ruined chambers, listening to her plaintive melody. But thy gates are desolate and sad; long hath the warder left unguarded his charge, and the watchman is seen no more upon thy broken and ivy-clad battlements. A thick cloud veils the face of the moon, and dimness spreads its wing over the majestic pile: the hollow winds murmur through the woods, and a soft voice of wailing seems to be heard amid the halls of solitude. As I stood upon the gray precipice, I felt my blood flow cold to my heart: no human being was near me, and the abode of man was far, far away from this dreary dwelling of the owl and the bat. A dark and shadowy steed rushed by me with a furious warrior on his back, whose garments were red with blood! They flew headlong, like a fleet shadow at noon, down the craggy steep, while the woods beyond rung with a wild and horrid laugh!

Nay, it could be nought but fancy. What will not the imagination conjure up at such an hour in such a place as this,—a time and place so

replete with every thing that constitutes the charm of romance. O, I could have wandered about the fallen mansion of departed grandeur till morning dawn——

But, I have not room to say more on these noble remains. I reached Paington about four in the morning, and soon after stretched my weary limbs in comfortable repose.

I remain,

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XLI.

Plymouth.

DEAR FRANCIS,

ONCE again I have parted with my Paington friends, whom perhaps I am never to behold again! Yet whose kindness, though time and distance should divorce me for ever from them, shall dwell eternal on the tablets of my grateful memory! Should I quit England, as such may yet be my fate, to return no more,—on Indian or Atlantic oceans, in the deep shadows of Colombia's forests, or the spicy islands of the east, where'er my parting spirit takes her flight,—my last sigh shall breathe a blessing on their names, and my soul remember their loving-kindness beyond the grave! But should fortune, however distant, crown my exertions with wealth or fair renown, what bliss should I feel to visit them once again, and gladden their generous hearts with the news of my prosperity.

After a second day's long and weary march over the mountains, I arrived on the Sunday evening at Hatherleigh; nor did I feel a little

gratified at reaching my journey's end, and entering, as I thought, on my new vocation. But what was my astonishment, mingled with confusion and anger, when I presented myself before the pedagogue of Hatherleigh to hear him say with all the composure of an adept in the falsehood and cunning of the world, that he must break his engagement with me now, as he had already taken into his house a youth who was regularly articled to him as an assistant, and with whom he had received a liberal premium. On such an act of cruelty and injustice I shall not animadvert,—it sufficiently speaks for itself: but it was a blow which I was not prepared to meet, and at one stroke vanished all my hopes, like the wand-struck scenes of enchantment. I became almost hopeless, and truly wretched, not knowing what to do, or where to go. I walked out of the town, and entering a field, threw myself in despair on the ground. As I lay deeply bewailing my hard fate, I heard the village-bells announce the hour of evening prayer. I arose and hastened towards the house of God, which I entered with feelings that may be conceived, but cannot be expressed in words. The service was more impressive, more delightfully solemn than any public worship I ever before

witnessed,—the evening psalms seemed as if chosen expressly for *me:* the sermon, as if the preacher had known my situation, was full of encouragement to rely, in all our multiplied difficulties, in all our manifold sorrows, on that God who is the father of all mankind, and whose tender mercies are over all his works: while the singing of the boys and girls under the instruction, as I afterwards learnt, of the clergyman's son, sounded in *my* ears, as their melodious voices pealed through the twilight aisles, inexpressibly angelical! Cast, as I then was, houseless and friendless on the world, I felt once more a pious confidence rising in my bosom that God, who knows all our wants and sorrows, would never leave me, never wholly forsake me.

When we left the church, it was almost dark; and as I walked up the street, I met with some persons just going to set off for Okehampton on their way to Plymouth. Thither I also resolved to go once more, and if I could obtain no other situation, to enter his Majesty's service as a common sailor. With these wayfaring strangers, though much fatigued with the toils of a previous long day's journey, beneath a cloudless sun I set off towards Okehampton. Before we had proceeded far, it grew very dark and the rain

descended in torrents unabatingly till we reached Okehampton, drenched to the skin, about one in the morning. Exhausted, hungry, and shivering with the cold, it was with difficulty I obtained a wretched bed; and having not even a dry change of linen, I was compelled to lie down in a very comfortless state, which joined with intense anxiety of mind, almost wholly deprived me of the restoring balm of sleep. When I rose, I had to put on my clothes still dripping with the rain of the preceding night:—this was indeed the most cheerless of miseries. But the sun shone brightly, which considerably revived my spirits; and as I journeyed onwards completely dried my apparel by the time I arrived at the end of my weary pilgrimage.

I cannot hear from you till I am in some situation on land, or safely lodged on board one of his Majesty's ships. God only knows what awaits me: in Him is all my trust, and all my hope.—Adieu, my dear friend; perhaps we shall never, never meet again! But "there is another and a better world!" where all tears are wiped away, and the grief of parting is never known. Farewell! may Heaven eternally bless you!

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XLII.

Cawsand, near Plymouth.

My Dear Friend,

You have been much troubled, I have no doubt, at my long silence; but you will cease to wonder when I have told you all that has happened to me since last I wrote. On my second arrival at Plymouth, I applied as before to other late-arrived captains of the navy, but to no purpose; and with the managers of the theatre I was equally unsuccessful. Having, however, a free access to the playhouse, I went two or three times to see the company perform. In the course of one of these evenings, I chanced to fall into conversation with a young man in the boxes of gentlemanly manners and classical acquirements, who appeared by his dress to be a military officer. At the end of the first piece we walked in the lobby. Our discourse chiefly turned on the ancient and modern poets, till we became so far lost to the diversions of the stage, as if we had been walking in some Academic grove. The rushing of the audience from different parts of

the house at length terminated our conversation, and told us that the amusements of the evening were closed. As we left the theatre, there was an evident reluctance in both to say—Farewell for ever! We appeared to be nearly of the same age; a similarity of taste, of feeling, and of sentiment seemed to create a mysterious sympathy of soul between us, awakening the first dawnings of pure, imperishable friendship, that opens its early blossoms to beauty this vale of tears, and withers not beneath the chilly blasts of misfortune, till death removes it from this bleak clime and sterile soil to bloom amid the eternal realms of blessedness in full and immortal perfection.

This youth, whom I found afterwards to be a Lieutenant A—, was gay, witty, and happy; yet the expressions of commiseration which dropped from his lips when speaking of the fate that too commonly attends the sons of genius, convinced me that he possessed true philanthropy of soul. I was lonely, friendless, and wretched; cast, as it were, on the world, without a situation or a home! Lieutenant A. proposed an adjournment for an hour to a tavern. I readily consented, as you may suppose. A bottle of wine was called for, and by the time it was well nigh emptied, won by his apparent sincerity and cordial

frankness, I had disclosed the full tale of all my disappointments. Never shall I forget the animation of Mr. A's countenance, nor those beams of benevolence that lit up his fine dark eyes as he rose from his seat and exclaimed, "By heaven! you shall go with me to Malta. I have just finished my education, received my commission, and in two or three days shall embark in a transport vessel to join my regiment now in that island. My father holds there a high situation under the government; and I am sure, after hearing your story, backed with my recommendation and importunity, will readily advance your interests, and place you in some comfortable situation. A new world, my dear fellow, is before you; sigh not at the thoughts of quitting your native land; it has been to you unpropitious, and inhospitable. A new clime will yield you new delights; and the novelty of seas untried, and countries unknown save by report, restore the wonted animation of your spirits; while fortune cannot fail to bestow her smiles on you in that island of ancient chivalry and romance." "Alas!" replied I, "your warm-hearted generosity to a stranger astonishes and oppresses me. I cannot accept your offer; for even were I to intrude myself on you, and certain success awaited my

arrival at Malta, my finances are now so low that I have not, believe me, the means of paying for my passage, nor any friend to whom I could apply for pecuniary assistance. Besides were it possible that I could go, what would your father think of an obscure and unknown wanderer? Surely your credulous benevolence would be highly blamed, and I should be despised as an adventuring intruder. I cannot go: but I thank you, with these tears of gratitude I thank you a thousand times from my very soul!" "Nay, nay, but you must, you shall go," warmly returned the youth. "I know my father's heart too well not to ensure you, beyond all doubt, a most friendly reception; and to relieve you from all disappointment, I will myself advance the money for your passage." "Not on any account!" exclaimed I. "Hold, my friend, for from this hour I will call you so, to save your noble pride and remove your reluctance to be obliged, I will but lend you the trifle, and you most assuredly will be able to repay me after you are settled on the island." Words were too poor to express my gratitude; my scruples, by his uncommon kindness and arguments, were soon all removed, and I shortly after left the inn with a promise to call the next day, and likewise to embark in the same

vessel with him in search of a better fate and kinder friends in a strange and distant land, than I had found in my own.

When I returned to my lodgings, I quickly retired to bed; but it was long ere I could close my eyes in sleep, for this most unlooked for and kind offer from a stranger continued to occupy my thoughts till day light; while Hope, unchecked by former disappointments, exerted her magic pencil dipt in all her wonted glowing colours, and drew scenes before my romantic imagination like the visions of some Arabian tale in isles and regions far remote, that filled my soul with anticipated rapture. Under every and whatever change, however,

I must always remain, dear Frank,

Yours truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XLIII.

Cawsand.

DEAR FRANK,

THE day soon arrived on which our embarkation took place. My trunks from Paington reached Plymouth just in time, and every thing was prepared. Our baggage was already on board, when I joined my new friend at the water's side, and entering a boat we quickly reached the transport lying in Plymouth harbour, destined to convey me far from my native shores. The troops were already on board; the vessel weighed anchor; and we put out to sea. It would be long and tedious to describe the different impressions of feeling stamped on the various faces of the soldiers, who, like myself, were bidding a long, and many a last adieu to the land of their birth. Some were gloomily swearing, and wore a countenance of mingled rage and wo; as if tyranny had rivetted on their limbs the galling chains of eternal slavery, and torn them from all they loved for ever. Others were merrily vociferating over their jolly cups, careless of waves

and rocks, or on what unknown shores they might next set their wandering feet. Others sang songs that seemed painfully to remind them of their native fields and rustic homes; of those convivial hours spent in the village ale-house, and at harvest-feast, where first they heard and learnt to chant the simple ballads of love and battle. And some there were who, as they paced the vessel's deck, or leant over her sides, gazed wistfully towards the now far-off shores of Britain, and hastily brushed the big tear of sorrowful remembrance and unavailing regret from their glistening eyelids.

Till now I had scarcely ever been on the rolling billows of the multitudinous deep. The sun, in all its evening pomp, was nigh its setting; and the sublimity and splendour of the scene came with full effect on my amazed and delighted senses. Far around me, on the gently heaving surface of that world of waters, appeared a large fleet of many kinds of vessels, which, like our own, were bound for distant lands under the protection of a powerful convoy. The English cliffs, beautifully tinted with various dies, stretched out their irregular lines along the northern horizon, while that wonderful fabric, the Eddystone lighthouse, in wild solitude, surrounded by the

undulating billows of the mighty ocean, shot its gilded column upward amid the golden clouds of evening, like some vast giant who alone surviving the field of slaughter, towers proudly in his mail-clad strength above the dying and the dead. The sun, in crimson glory, seemed resting for a few moments after a weary journey on the purple hills of Cornwall; the skies appeared like an immense sheet of glowing emerald and hyacinth; while the wide expanse of the deep below was tinted with varied hues of the richest gems. But ah, my friend, these splendours, like all earthly glory, were fading every moment beneath the eye that gazed so fondly on them. The broad sun sunk below the horizon; dimness began to float round the cliffs of my native land, and, England was fast receding from my aching sight. What words can portray the feelings of that mournful hour! "Farewell, perhaps for ever," sighed I to myself, "thou land of my birth,—thou boasted isle of freedom and happiness! Mistress of the seas, thou sit'st sublime in thy strength, and fair renown covers thee with a robe of glory. Though I have found in thee nought but disappointment, still do I love thee, still art thou dear to my heart! Ah, little does my fond mother, in her far-distant vale of

seclusion and quiet, think that her only son has embarked on the tempestuous ocean to visit foreign shores; that he is at this moment bidding a long farewell to his native country! Ah, little does my friend dream that I am now on the tossing billow, straining my tear-dimmed eyes for a last parting view of the faint blue cliffs of Britain!——Alas, they are faded; sunk in distant darkness, and nought can I now behold but the vast ocean and misty sky!"

A fresh breeze sprang up, my friend came on deck, took me by the arm, and led me below. In the cabin I was introduced to several officers, who were merrily drowning all their sorrows of the past and cares for the future in the spirit-exhilirating bowl. Among many other tales related by the company, one officer gave us an account of a visit to Mount Etna during a late tremendous eruption, in nearly the following words:—

"On the 28th of March, at Melazzo, in Sicily, in the morning the air was excessively hot and foggy; at noon the wind veered to the west, and it became much cooler; in the evening at sunset the fog dispersed, and we then beheld the cause of the unusual heat in the early part of the day. Mount Etna fully presented itself to our view, with its gigantic head crowned with an immense

volume of crimson flame. It was a fearful and continued explosion! a hideous mingling of fire and smoke, lightning, ashes, and burning stones! A little lower down on one side of the mountain issued another vivid blaze, from whence we plainly observed a red torrent of lava descending in ruinous fury. A ridge of hills rose betwixt Melazzo and Etna, which prevented our beholding the full extent of its terrific course; but we could perceive that this vast river of fire had divided, and moved forward towards Langua Grossa on the left, and Randazzo on our right.

"With all the curiosity of an Englishman, I determined to set out the next day, in company with two or three brother officers, on a visit to this wonderful mountain. On our first day's journey, near Langua Grossa, we met the lava river. Pictures and images of saints were hung on the outside of the neighbouring houses by their superstitious inhabitants, in the hope that they would divert the course of the fatal stream. The progression of this river of desolation is very tardy; and it appears by day like a mass of black rocks and stones slowly rolling and tumbling over each other, while clouds of smoke are continually issuing from every aperture. But I know not how to describe to you the tremendous

scene that presented itself on the evening of my arrival amid the horrid craters of Etna, of which there are thirteen, one above the other, on the side of the mountain. Several of these furnaces of boiling sulphur cast up thick volumes of smoke; and others discharged with inconceivable fury, showers of red hot stones. The branches of the neighbouring trees were nearly all knocked off by the repeated volleys, and the ground was covered in many places knee deep with burning ashes. With great difficulty and considerable danger, after leaping from rock to rock across the lava-rivers, we reached the very mouth of the lower crater, which was burning with the greatest violence. It was filled with a liquid mass that tossed to and fro like the billows of the raging sea, often boiling over its many-coloured sides and augmenting those torrents of fire which we could discern, by their ghastly light, rolling far away down the unequal declivities of the mountain, and with irresistible force destroying every thing in their fatal progress.

"The darkness of evening gave a tenfold effect to the flame-clad burstings of the troubled mountain, whose continued and astounding roar and frightful moanings were so loud, that we could not hear each other speak. The sky above us

was filled with black clouds and tempests; the ferelli, or volcanic lightning, flashed from their thick folds, and as they hung over the infernal abyss that sent up its column of fire in tremendous grandeur, their centre reflected the many-coloured glare of the unfathomable pit, and was illuminated with the most bright, but dreadful splendour. I have heard the deep-mouthed cannon spread its thunder along the whole line of a grand fleet, and seen the ocean-waves tinged with human blood; I have heard the shout of armies when bayonet meets bayonet, and seen the brave fall around me on every side; I have heard the bombardment of cities echo from hill to hill, and seen palaces, churches, and citadels in one universal blaze; but never did I hear sounds so terrific, or behold sights so sublimely awful as the convulsive groans and flames of Etna in her midnight explosions."

I felt much interested with this account; but as the motion of the vessel soon began to make me dreadfully ill, I retired to my birth; and during my whole voyage I was seldom relieved from the misery of sea-sickness. On the 21st of August, about nine o'clock P. M. we were overtaken in the Bay of Biscay by a storm, and the lives of all on board thrown into great jeopardy.

I have often read powerful descriptions of terrible tempests at sea; but O how weak, how jejune are they all to the frightful reality experienced by one who has never before ventured on that mighty waste of dark and troubled waters! I cannot attempt to paint the night of horrors that we passed. Sorely did I repent, as I lay in my birth, heaved up and down by the mountainous billows, now rolling on this side and now on that, my rash folly in embarking on the treacherous deep in the hope to obtain any transient advantage this world can afford. In such an hour, how despicable, Ambition, dost thou appear! How dreadful was it, as I lay half dead with sickness, to reflect on those vast and dismal depths of ocean yawning beneath to swallow us up, and into which the trembling vessel frequently seemed rushing headlong. At such a moment I often involuntarily caught hold of the sides of my narrow birth, as if to save myself from sinking down the horrid gulph; while those sounds of terror, which in that night of alarm and confusion assailed my ears, can never by me be forgotten. The rush and roar of the foaming surges, raging like a hungry lion to swallow us up; the creaking of the masts and yards of the ship; the howling of the winds through the cordage; the hurried

voices of sailors, calling to each other amid the storm; the cries and prayers of some, and the blood-chilling curses of others——but let me hasten from the faintly-sketched picture,—the bare recollection is still dreadful!

After a speedy voyage, on the 9th of September at six in the morning, my friend called me on deck to behold the immense, and to all but English courage, impregnable fortresses of the Island of Malta, to which we were now rapidly drawing near. The sun was already risen above the waters of the Mediterranean, that sparkled with quivering radiance far and wide. Numerous vessels here and there skimmed its tranquil bosom, whose sails gleamed like silver in the early ray. Before us appeared the towers of St. Angelo, St. Elmo, and Ricasoli rising from their sea-laved foundations of eternal rock, with their ranks of mortars and thunder-breathing artillery piled tier on tier. Unmoved by tempests, battle-storms, and ocean-floods, they stand the invincible guardians of the port of Malta, overlooking in terrific grandeur the cities of Vittoriosa, Bormula, and La Valetta. Well might Sinan Bassa, as I have somewhere read, when sent to besiege Tripoli by Soliman—who commanded him on his way to destroy that nest of robbers, as he designated the

Knights of Malta—exclaim to the Corsair Dragut, as he urged him to begin an attack, "Dost thou see that castle?" pointing to the stronghold of St. Angelo. "The eagle certainly could not place its nest on the summit of a steeper rock; to reach it, we ought to have wings like the eagle; for all the troops in the world would never be able to force it!"

But to return. All now was bustle and preparation on board; and every one expressed by his looks and actions, the eagerness he felt to set his feet once more on terra firma. After our debarkation, my friend and myself hastily passed on through the narrow and unpaved streets of Vittoriosa, which gradually rises from the verge of the ocean to the distance of more than half a mile. The houses are handsome, being all built of freestone. We here hired a Maltese carriage,—an unwieldy vehicle on two wheels large enough to hold six persons. The driver, without shoes or stockings, ran by the side of the horses, and goaded them on with a sharp iron nail. In this clumsy machine, we drove with our baggage into La Valetta. On our way, we passed by a magnificent palace, belonging once to the Grand Master of the Order, and saw two fine churches, which I afterwards found were ornamented with beautiful

pictures and some exquisite sculpture. In the centre of Vittoriosa is the market-place, where stands a handsome bronze statue of the Grand Master who built the city. This place, like the other adjoining towns of Malta, is adorned with numerous statues, refreshing fountains that pour forth their cooling waters in every square, and saintly images and madonas at every corner, before which nightly lamps are kept burning, enclosed in a case of lattice-work, that illuminate the streets, and have a singular and romantic effect.

In a short time, after crossing drawbridges thrown over immense ditches hewn out of the living rock, flanked by tremendous batteries, and passing covered ways fifty feet in length, we entered the city of La Valetta; and in the Strada de Mizzodi, beyond the arsenal, alighted before a grand mansion which formerly belonged to one of the noble knights. Here dwelt the father of my friend, young A. With a heart palpitating with hope and fear, I entered the palace. We were shown into a grand hall; but the countenances of the attendants expressed sorrow and anxiety. To Mr. A's inquiries concerning his father, he was informed that their master was confined to his bed, and little hope entertained of

his life. Here language fails to paint my friend's grief, or my own perplexity and misery. Alas, Frank, I was doomed from the cradle to know nothing but sorrow and disappointment. My friend reached Malta but just in time to close the dying eyes of a beloved, an affectionate parent! He expired the day after our arrival!

I am,

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XLIV.

Cawsand.

DEAR FRANK,

ILLFORTUNE continued to pursue me with the same rigour in foreign countries, as she had done in my own. With Mr. A's death expired all hopes of my obtaining a situation at Malta. The heat of the climate, though tempered with the sea breèzes, affected my health; and, to complete my disappointments, orders were received from the Government at home for the speedy removal of my friend's regiment to that general grave of Europeans,—the West Indies. Perplexed, distressed, and wretched, I wandered about the towns of Malta like a troubled ghost. Without the power of reimbursing my friend the advances he had already made for my passage, I could not endure the idea of intruding on him for a fresh supply to take me back; I therefore applied, unknown to him, to every captain that I could find bound for England, offering my services in any way for a passage to some port in my native land. It so chanced that after many

days of toil and anxiety, I met with an Irish captain from Cork bound to Plymouth; who, learning my situation, most kindly offered, for the trifling service of my pen in arranging and copying off his accounts, to give me a passage. The satisfaction thus afforded me I quickly communicated to my friend, who six days before I left Malta, embarked with his regiment for one of the West India islands.

Our parting was melancholy indeed. I saw him to the waters' side,—those waters which were to divide us for ever! As he was about to step into the boat, he drew a small manuscript volume of his favourite selected poems from his pocket; "Accept," said he, "these beauties of poesy, copied by my own hand, as a parting tribute of my lasting esteem; and let this little book be the simple token of our eternal friendship. Perhaps we shall meet on earth no more; but true friendship survives the tomb, and though continents and oceans divide us, though far asunder we sleep in dust, yet our spirits shall one day unite in the fellowship of the blest, amid those happier climes where parting is never known, and sorrow and disappointment cannot come. Farewell, my dearest friend, perhaps for ever! It is a melancholy thought: but farewell! and God eternally bless you!"

I gladly received the book, and placed it in my bosom; but to say farewell I found was impossible: I felt as if choked with grief. I ardently pressed him in my arms, and rushed from the beach. From the city ramparts I watched the vessel that bore him from me, till it became a dim speck in the hazy horizon, till it sunk from my straining eyes for ever, and the darkness of evening fell on sea and land. If ever I felt myself an isolated being, cut off from all the kind sympathies of social life, I felt it deepest in that melancholy hour. A stranger in a foreign island, far remote from my native country, and all I knew or loved; far removed from all for whom I entertained the slightest attachment.

But what was my astonishment, on returning to my lodgings, to find within the title page of the little volume my friend had given me, a twenty-pound note of the Bank of England. It was too late to return it: and as I shall never perhaps have an opportunity to repay the obligations my friend has laid me under, all I can do is to pray that God may return such unmerited kindness a thousand fold on the head of one, whom it would be the height of ingratitude ever to forget.

You will say perhaps that our friendship was somewhat suddenly formed; but have you

never heard of those wonderful sympathies, or corresponding qualities, found in some minds, though perhaps rarely, which produce instantaneous mutual attraction? That such things are, in love and friendship too, I am well assured of. Sir Kenelm Digby has treated of them with a most delightful mysticism: and the following cause of sudden friendship taken from an old volume I lately met with at Plymouth is, I think, curious and interesting:—"Some particles of the vital flame being called up into the eyes on sight of a person that pleases us, dart themselves in emanations from thence to the object which is so agreeable; where meeting with particles of the same nature, they are together communicated to that fountain of life—the heart, and cause there that pleasing sensation we term friendship: which being all the work but of one instant, is the reason why the mutual pleasure is felt at sight, it being too quick and exquisite for the organs of speech to express."

But it is late; and I must conclude with the assurance that I always remain

Yours, most sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XLV.

Cawsand.

My Dear Friend,

Before I inform you of my departure from Malta, I would fain give you some account of my wanderings about that interesting island. Antiquity says it was formerly inhabited by the nymph Calypso. Impressed with this romantic idea, when I have discovered along its shores some spacious cavern or subterraneous grotto,—shaded by a grove of orange and fig-trees, whose blossoms, with the rich roses of Malta that outvie in sweetness those of Pæstam or the banks of Nilus, filled the air with delicious fragrance,—I have fancied it to be the very cave in which that pleasure-loving goddess detained her beloved Ulysses; and "in my mind's eye," beheld him lying in pensive mood on the flower-embroidered banks of its transparent rill, increasing the winds with sighs and the brook with tears; gazing wishfully on the neighbouring ocean that encompassed him about, and envying the happy birds that skimmed the refluent deep: while

" A various sylvan scene
Appeared around, and groves of living green
Poplars, and alders ever quivering played,
And nodding cypress formed a fragrant shade;
On whose high branches, waving with the storm
The birds of broadest wing their mansion form:
The chough, the sea-mew, the loquacious crow,
And scream aloft and skim the deep below.
Depending vines the shelving cavern screen,
With purple clusters blushing through the green.
Four limpid fountains from the clefts distil,
And every fountain pours a several rill,
In mazy windings wandering down the hill:
Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were crowned,
And glowing violets threw their odours round.
A scene, where if a god should cast his sight,
A god might gaze, and wander with delight."

The modern name is supposed by some to have been given by the Greeks, who succeeded its first possessors, the Phœnicians; but Mr. Weston gives an explanation of an unpublished Phœnician coin, in the Archæologia of 1804, by which it appears that the name of Malta was given by the Phœnicians, who fled thither as to a place of refuge: Melita signifying *refugium*. Did these Canaanites fly hither from the exterminating sword of Joshua, as others of them did to the opposite continent of Africa? Be that as it may,—driven by the over-

whelming force of the Saracens and Turks from Jerusalem, Mayal, Arcra, Lemissa in the island of Cyprus, and lastly from Rhodes, the brave Knights, or as they were originally called, the Hospitalers of St. John of Jerusalem here found permanent refuge. Malta was granted to them by Charles V., but burthened with the heavy condition of their defending the city of Tripoli from the Moslem power. The Order obtained possession of this island in 1530, which Villiers de l' Isle Adam found quite defenceless; but which he so fortified as to render it impregnable, and the bulwark of Christendom against the Ottoman. He died full of years, and full of martial glory; and on his tomb is inscribed the following epitaph:—

HERE LIES TRUE VIRTUE VICTORIOUS OVER FORTUNE.

In the churches, the squares, the market-places, and grand parades of all the cities in this island of chivalry and warlike renown, are to be seen numerous statues and monuments of its princes and heroes, who fought, and bled, and died in the cause of the Christian religion. Alas! when will the time arrive, in which Religion shall fling

aside her robes of blood, and wear the white garment of universal peace and good-will towards men!

In 1565 this island sustained its last important siege by the armies and fleets of Soliman, and was most heroically defended by John de la Valette, the forty-seventh Grand-Master, and his noble knights. The gallant La Valette was wounded in a breach of the fortifications; and when some of his brave companions in arms requested him to retire, he exclaimed, "At the age of seventy-one, can I finish my life more gloriously than dying with my brethren?" The shores were deluged with the blood of the Turks, and the trenches filled with their carcasses. So gallantly were they repulsed from this invincible island, that they never presumed to appear before it again. On the grand scene of his martial glory, La Valette built the present city, which bears his name, and to which the convent of the order was removed. This city of La Valetta, the capital of Malta, is situated on a commanding promontory or peninsula. Its chief street is the Strada Reale, which extends from Porta Reale, the grand entrance from Floriano (another city without the walls,) to the castle of St. Elmo. It contains eleven or twelve principal streets, two palaces of the

Grand Master, numerous splendid mansions, or hotels, belonging once to the knights militant, many churches, with the magnificent cathedral of St. John, the patron of the Order. But I must wave at present an account of its unconquerable fortifications, and confine my letter to a few of those places which were to me the most interesting.

In the course of my rambles in the interior, I visited the grotto of St. Paul, not far from Citta Vecchia, a fortified city on a hill, and once the capital of the island. The inhabitants believe that St. Paul was shipwrecked on their shores on his passage to Rome, and visited the adjacent city, which was formerly called Melita: but the fact is, that the apostle was not shipwrecked on the island of Melita Africana, but on Melita Illyrica; for here are no serpents, nor could the inhabitants in those days, under the dominion of the Romans, be styled barbarians. During the period of his stay, the apostle is said to have taken up his abode in this cavern. It is divided into three small chapels by iron grates. The inner one contains a statue of the saint, and an altar of white marble. How many prayers, thought I, as I stood before the image, have been offered up on this spot. How many vows of seafaring men and naval warriors have been here uttered

to a block of senseless stone! And where are thy votaries now, oft-frequented Saint? The careless winds have scattered them on the deep; regardless of their sacred patron, the weapons of their foes have destroyed them, and the wild billows swallowed them up. O let me then, when I again embark on the tempestuous ocean, put my whole trust in Him who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and gathered the turbulent winds in his fist!

I soon hastened on to Citta Vecchia, the ancient metropolis of Malta. It is still the seat of the bishoprick, and has a ruinous palace of the Grand Master and a spacious cathedral: but I had no opportunity of viewing its catacombs, which are excavated out of the solid rock into streets with such regularity, that they are called the subterraneous city. But the places I loved to visit, were the palaces of the martial Prior in La Valetta, and the grand church of St. John, the patron of this noble Order of chivalry.

As I wandered over the once-magnificent halls, (some of which are still hung with splendid gobelin tapestry,) the forsaken corridors, and spacious armories of this noble palace, all that I had read in gothic romances and the wild tales of chivalry seemed fully realized before me. What

scenes have been witnessed within these deserted walls! How often has this proud saloon been crowded with the ambassadors of the kings of Europe, as the Grand-Master, prince of Gozo, pillar of the language of Provence, clad in the splendid robes of his Order, and decorated with the gem-blazing signs of his holy knighthood, received them enthroned in state where yonder stood the golden chair of dominion. Around him were assembled the grand marshal, grand hospitaller, grand admiral, grand conservator, the Tureopolier knights of commanderies, and servitors religious and military, the pride and glory of many Christian nations, clad in their glittering dalmatics, amices, and snow-white stoles, adorned with chains of gold and rich crosses of their warlike Order. Here in council have met the heroic champions of christendom, the manful defenders of the Christian faith. How have those sumptuous apartments rung with midnight feasting, minstrelsey, and mirth! Those halls, so silent and dreary, where nothing but the mockery of pomp is now remaining, how oft have they resounded to the song of victory over the insulting mussulman, with the voice of triumph at the discomfiture of the ruthless saracen.

How forlorn, how silent, palace of chivalry,

art thou become! The harp of the minstrel rings not through thy unfrequented wine-chambers, nor echo thy lofty halls to the clanging mail of the war-accoutred knight going forth to battle in the pride of his strength. Thy princes have betrayed thee: they are gone into captivity. Thy nobles and chiefs, that clothed themselves in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, have forsaken thee for ever: they wander strangers and pilgrims in far distant lands. They shall meet no more in thy tapestried saloon of power, at council or banquet, nor throng thy gates in the warlike magnificence of vaunting conquest. The glory of thy knighthood is departed from thee: the pictured trophies of thy former might, that hang emblazoned on thy faded walls, are veiled with cobwebs and dust. Thou who sat'st amid the ocean the virgin daughter of renown, how art thou fallen! The armorial pomp of thy princely chiefs is torn from thy brows: thy Christian champions are fled from the voice of thy loud lament: they gave thee up to thy enemies: they cowardly fled from thee in the day of battle: they betrayed, and then forsook thee in thy terrible famine and desolation. The banners of the moon that once floated in emblazoned pride above the Paynim's

shouting ranks, stream down thy deserted walls, rent and defiled, like the garments of mourning and lamentation: while the helmet of steel and iron vestments of battle hang neglected and dimmed with corroding rust, in unregarded disorder, around the walls of thy spacious armoury.

How deeply here has sighed o'er his long captivity, the turbaned chieftain of the Othoman blood: and here the swarthy Moor has shed burning tears of sorrow for his cruel fate; and, gazing from his prison-windows on the distant ocean, breathed vows of implacable vengeance on his Christian foes, whose victorious galleys prevailed in battle-hour, and bore him a captive of state far from home and all he loved. In vain did the maiden of his choice look from the flower-woven lattice of her Moorish tower, and demand why his chariot was so long in coming; why moved so tardily the wheels of his triumphant car. In vain her lovely damsels awoke the languishing strains of the *sine keman*,* or sweetly touched with their tortoise-shell instruments the eight-stringed tambour. In vain she cried—"Has not my Sulieman won the victory; and are not his brows crowned with the radiant wreath of conquest? Has he not divided the

* The viol d'amour.

spoil?, Has he not to every warrior of renown given the garments of splendour, and the crooked falchion of death? To my Sulieman are given the noblest of the infidel fleet, with chains of gold and robes meet for a conqueror to wear in the day of triumph." "So perish the enemies of the cross!" rung the harp in the monastic halls of chivalry, in the festive towers of St. John; for the dust of the proud Sulieman found an unblest grave amid the rocks of the ocean isle.

The church or cathedral of St. John is the centre of a fine square, from whence diverge four principal streets. It has two large towers with bells that rival in magnitude Great Tom of Lincoln, which is said to have been the gift of Cardinal Wolsey. Though the outside of this Christian temple is not adorned with the architective beauties and grandeur of sculpture which render our gothic cathedrals such wonderful monuments of art, yet the interior is magnificent in the extreme. Here I saw, at one view, restored all the splendour, all the ecclesiastical glory that once filled our now naked conventual churches, whose walls appear so cold and cheerless; for here the Catholic service is performed with all its ritual pomp, with all its solemn and imposing ceremonials. As I advanced along the august

aisle, and beheld its majestic roof painted with inimitable tints, glowing with sacred designs exquisitely drawn by the hand of divine artists, supported with vast columns more than thirty feet in height of the most beautiful *verde antique*, its pavement sparkling with ten thousand mosaic gems; beheld the grand illuminated altar with its baldaquin, or pillared canopy of Seravitian marble, set with the richest gems and decked with the sweetest flowers, on which the light streaming down from above seemed to shed an unworldly lustre, like those rainbow beams of celestial glory that darted from the opening heavens on the head of the Saviour as he ascended at his baptism from the sacred waves of Jordan, I stood lost in awful astonishment, and wrapt in a transport of admiration. I seemed as if transported back into those past ages of our forefathers, when the pomp of the ancient religion shed a dazzling magnificence over our stupendous cathedrals. All that I had read in the sublimest works of romantic imagination; all that a Lewis and a Radcliffe have painted with such a masterly hand in their ecclesiastic descriptions, was realized before me as the fine Italian figures of the Maltese passed to and fro the sumptuous aisles; as the bravo-like form of some stern officer leant against a ban-

nered pillar; as the priests in their splendid tunics, rochets, amices, and stoles, stiff with gold and precious stones, officiated at the high altar; as the cross-bearers led the sacred processions, and the thurifers flung aloft the smoking incense in their golden censors; while the solemn thunder of the melodious organ awoke the choral strains of praise and adoration, and gave the highest effect to the soul-captivating scene.

"Beside the altar stood the throne of the Grand-Master, covered with the richest crimson velvet: but his seat of dominion was empty; the stalls of the monastic heroes shall be filled no more with the renowned sons of chivalry; the sainted royalty of the gallant chief, and the martial train of gorgeous knights no longer parade in warlike pomp the sacred aisles; the military show of their pride is gone for ever! Beneath my feet lie the mouldering relics of the champions of Christ, the knights of the cross, the defenders of the faith. Their banners wave aloft in dusty grandeur, and their tombs are overlaid with gem-work of the most splendid colouring. Each one has his armorial honours in the dazzling tints of pompous heraldry engraved on his last dark, narrow dwelling, the mockery of renowned greatness, the feeble and perishing tablet of a transient fame;

but their tale of warrior-deeds is already obliterated from the records of Time; their glory is vanished like a vision of the night; they perish in dark decay; their bones are rottenness and ashes:

> "Dull silence is upon them all!
> The fathomless obscurity of Fate
> Envelopes them, as they had never been!"

No more shall the trumpet's stormy voice awake them from their everlasting sleep; no more shall they lift the sword or spear in the dreadfully glorious array of battle. The vilest clown tramples them beneath his feet. How are the mighty fallen! how are the weapons of war perished! As a cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more for ever!

Subjoined is a copy of a poem which I wrote during my short stay in the island, on the vicissitudes and disasters of

Your friend

SYLVATIC

HOME.

In early life the path I chose
Which led from home.—
In early life, ah me! why did I rove
So far from home!
My quiet home, embowered in wood and grove,
Where bloom the golden cowslip and wild rose,
And on the verdant hillock grows
The fragrant-breathing thyme,
That weeps rich tears to the young prime;
Where the sweet stillness of the moonlight vale
Is only broken by the nightingale
Telling her sorrows so melodiously,
That all the winds in concert deeply sigh:
Where the sweet quiet of the summer day
Is only broken by the amorous lay
Of silver-talking dove in woodbine bowers,
Or blackbird hid amidst the hawthorn flowers;
And yet I fled,
Doomed in sad bitterness to roam,
Far, far from home!

Through many a scene of gay resort I strayed
Far, far from home;
Where pleasure, crowned with odor-dropping wreaths,
Smiles on her votaries, and the viol breathes
Its soul-enchanting airs; where loudly brayed
The warlike trump, flinging its notes of fire

O'er all the rose-lipped quire
Of virgins in theatric pride,
And buskined heroes' mimic state,
As in triumphant car they ride
With bannered pomp and sword of fate.
But happiness, true happiness,
That the wood-hermit's cell doth bless,
Was ne'er on Melpomenian ground,
Nor in Thalia's temple found;
For in the enchanted Thespian bowers
Malice and bitter Falsehood dwell;
And lurk beneath their fairest flowers
Envy's grim snakes, those fiends of hell!
Ah me! why did I thither roam,
Bewitched by scenes so falsely bright,
That end in misery's tenfold night,
Far, far from home!

And I have wandered o'er the deep,
Far, far from home:
Oft lulled by tempest winds to sleep,
And cradled in the ocean-foam.
Gay was the hour, and soft the breezes blew
Th' Atlantic, drest in richest sapphirine hue,
Its sweetest music called from Neptune's dome,
To tempt me far,—yea, far from home:
And sunbeams from the clouds leaped laughingly
Into the sparkly bosom of the sea,
As if amid its wealthy bowers to stray,

And show its treasures to the wondering day,
When on the waves, smoothed by her golden wing,
Ambition launched my prow, and bade Hope sing
Her syren lay of witchery,—painting bright
The distant prospect that to fancy rose,
Like those sun-penciled scenes the evening skies disclose;
While wealth and honour in a land unknown,
I fondly thought would soon be all my own,
Far, far from home.

But Disappointment, Grief, and Care,
And loss of Friendship met me there,
A rueful band,
On that strange, distant island strand,
Far, far from home!
There as in bitter agony
I on the rock-surrounding wave,
Like famed Ulysses, cast my eye;
How did I weep, and think a watery grave
Had been much better than in grief to roam
Thus, without friends or hope, far, far from home!

Ah! could I see thee once again,
Dear, dear-loved home;
And hear my father's welcome greeting,
My mother's fond embraces meeting,
I then should bid adieu to this sad pain
Of disappointment rankling at my heart,
And hope and pray from them no more to part.

Yes, now I feel a wish that I could dwell
A lonely hermit in their ' umble cell,
Sheltered by rising groves and yew-tree bowers,
Where their perfume the honeysuckle flowers
Shed round my chamber lattice, and the rose
In her unrivalled beauty proudly glows;
Where the wild stranger swallow sits and pours
Her simple song, nor heeds the smoke that soars
Ambitious of the sky, by morning breezes curled,
Quitting like me that calm abode
To wander where fierce winds and tempests take their roar
There safe again, no more would I
For distant scenes or countries sigh;
Nor e'er beyond its woods and valleys roam,
A wretched pilgrim through the unfriendly world,
Far, far from home!

END OF VOL. I.

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